american craft

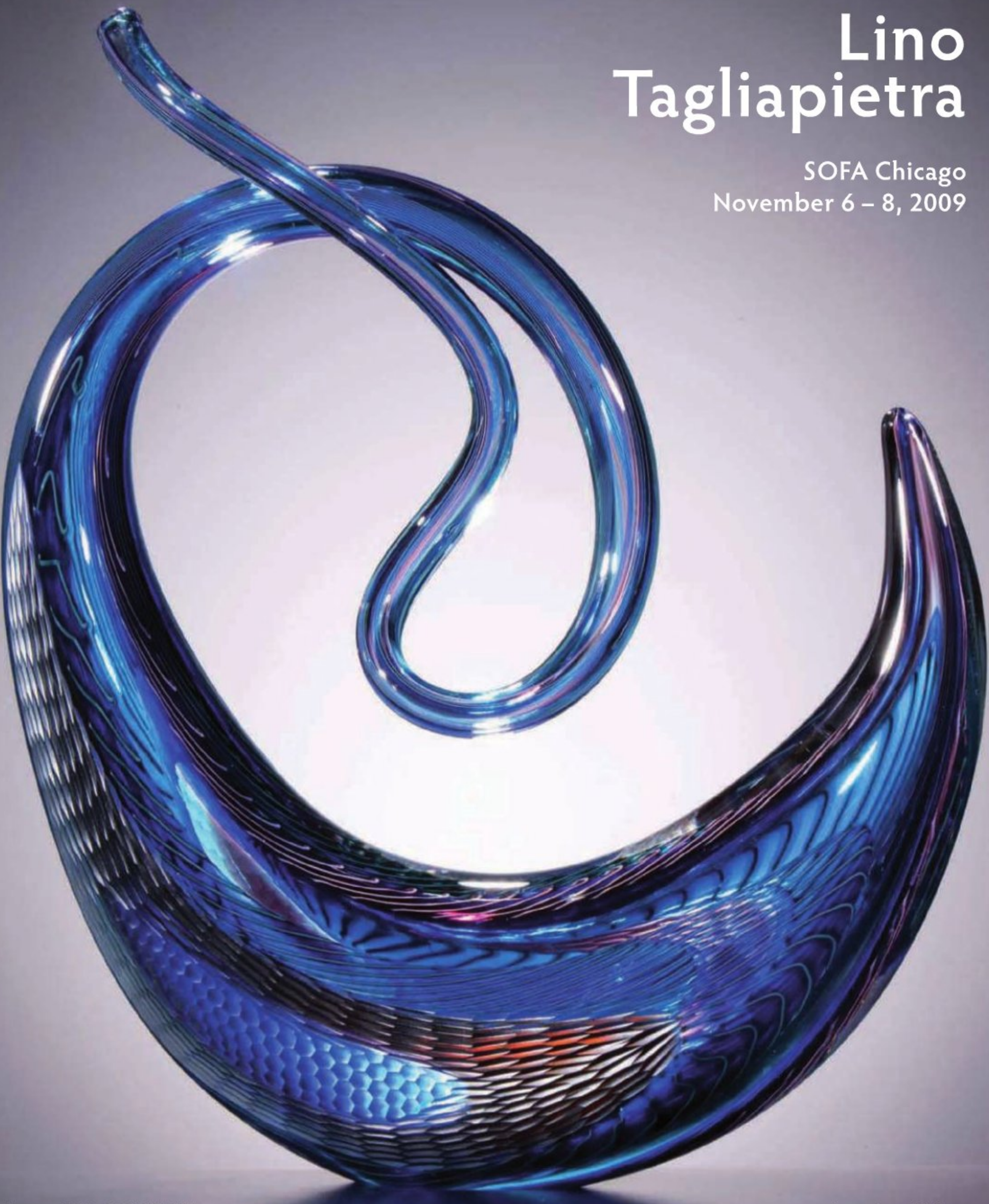
Akiko Busch
On Things
That Challenge
and Comfort

Berlin:
Ceramists,
Jewelers
and Clothing
Designers
Congregate



Lauren Kalman
Jewelry as Restraint or Affliction

americancraftmag.org


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Vol. 69, No. 5
October/November 2009

Published by the
American Craft Council
www.craftcouncil.org



On the Cover:
Lauren Kalman's *Hard Wear, Tongue Gilding,* 2006, digital print, laminated on acrylic {h. 35 in, w. 23 in}.
page 038

Above:
Mixed-media jewelry by Svenja John is just one example of the exciting work happening in Berlin.
page 066

Departments

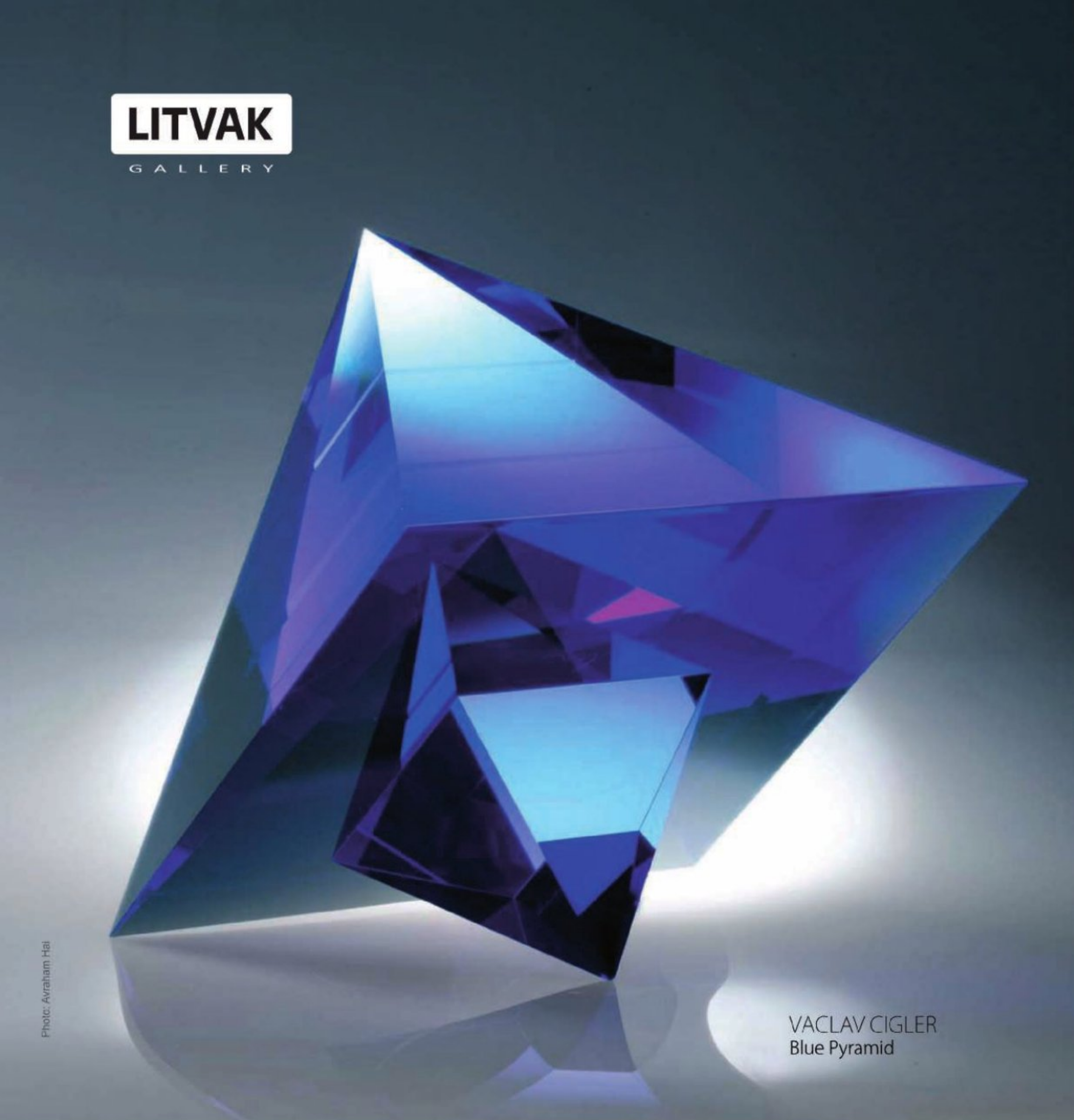
Features



Lauren Kalman installing *Aural, Oral, Digital Gems,* a piece in her 2006 *Hard Wear* works.

For Kalman, body image and the grotesque are fertile territory for exploring our obsession with the body and its portrayal in venacular images.

americancraftmag.org
More photos, more reviews, more listings, more interviews and more of everything craft-related and beyond.


LITVAK
GALLERY
Photo: Avraham Hai
VACLAV CIGLER
Blue Pyramid



We Hear You



The cover of the August/September 2009 American Craft.

Representation

I'm a blacksmith based in North Carolina. Since reading the Editor's Letter, "The Big Blur," about the mixing of art, craft and design in the February/March issue, I completed an architectural commission, taught a short class to art students and started designing a garden gate. And throughout, I found myself drifting back to those words and my unease.

Aside from the question of whether a blur indicates an inability to focus, it's a question of representation. There are many outlets for architecture/design, and for what most call the fine arts. There are several national crafters' publications, as well as a slew of how-to, survey blogs and websites. But in terms of American studio craft as a practice and a movement, we're underrepresented.

A lot of objects that I enjoy come out of a conscious intersection of the big three. But when I see makers and work that are simultaneously featured on designboom or *Dwell* or *Metropolis* or *Artforum,* I can't help but wonder if that space could be put toward a different use.

I'm not a Luddite. I like having different, cool and unforeseen people and works pointed out to me. But as a studio practitioner, I hope for a little more focus from this particular outlet.

MIKE ROSSI
Bakersville, North Carolina

The Long Goodbye

O.K. You win. I'm giving up, yelling uncle, throwing in the towel. I have just finished reading the August/September issue of a publication I have loved and collected for 30 years. Now I have fallen out of love. It started with a change in the relationship spearheaded by Andrew Wagner. Out with the old, in with the new. Let's talk design; let's appeal to a younger audience; let's put curlicues on our type! The studio craft movement is on its last arthritic leg, and the beautifully crafted object is wheezing its last gasp.

I tried to adapt; I really did. I tried to fight the gnawing feeling that this paramour of 30 years was just in midlife crisis. I could afford to make some changes for the sake of the union. I started by doing what Mr. Wagner asked. I let him know what I thought of his changes. I was met with "sorry you don't understand, but trust me and you will be renewed." So I tried to trust, but freely admit to being skeptical. Yet with each new issue I saw new signs of the impending death of the relationship. I was buoyed by the issue that focused on Philadelphia and its artists. A little sparkle of the old days shone. Unfortunately, the next issue retreated as if the previous had been a momentary lack of judgment. It was clear that the publication must lead this relationship. No

more give and take. Just take it or leave it.

The papers have been signed with this last issue. Curtis Benzle tried to counsel and did an eloquent job. His remarks were met with the same "yes, but" that had been thrown at me. Testimony to the demise came from Glenn Adamson, whom I had always admired for his ability to see both sides of an issue. Maybe he still does. But his admonition to give up on the past, once-vital approach to craft was the coup de grace. It was time for me to accept that I, along with my beloved autonomous and rarified objets d'art, must remain trapped in a retrograde exercise but continue to embrace it.

I will heal. I do not wish ill for my former partner. We simply find ourselves, as so many couples do these days, wanting different things. It was a beautiful relationship while it lasted.

So I will find comfort with dinosaurs of like mind–the ones that are still awed by the tangible beauty of the well-made object. They will be my comfort as we die out. But who knows, maybe in some distant millennium when the hand is atrophied from disuse, some brash young scientist will want to clone one of us as a curiosity. A creature of another time. A creature content to have lived when the opposable thumb was at its zenith.

RON PORTER
Columbia, South Carolina

Editors' Note: At the risk of making another inadequate reply, may we ask why a sentence or two of Adamson outweighs the evidence of eight pages of Kathy Erteman's beautiful objects, or the documentation, in our other two features, that handmaking continues to have significance as well as broad appeal? And as to your loyalty to some definition of craft, do you mean the crafts of the 1950s or those of the 60s? The crafts of the 70s or those of the 80s? Craft was certainly not just one thing, static all that time. As Adamson points out, Craft Horizons *represented an enormous variety in approaches to craft, and, as its successor, this magazine remains committed to examining that invigorating range of handmaking.*

More on Kyoko Okubo

Since the August/September issue of American Craft came out, Mobilia Gallery has gotten calls and e-mails for more information on Kyoko Okubo (Material Culture). The gallery is offering her more shows, including a one-person show at the next SOFA New York.

I met Kyoko at a free-for-all art event in Tokyo, when I first moved there five years ago. This is an event where over 1,000 people bring their things; 99 percent are not so good, but when I saw her work I was amazed and felt, "This woman has no idea how great she is." So I have been helping her ever since, and the response has always been very strong.

At this point, the gallery is handling everything for her, with the help of a Japanese independent curator. This article was my last effort, since I have left Japan. Thanks so much for publishing it!

Some information that is not on the gallery site is available at artfoundout.blogspot.com/search/label/Okubo.

SCOTT ROTHSTEIN
Bangkok

Write to us:
letters@craftcouncil.org
American Craft magazine
72 Spring Street, 6th Floor
New York, New York 10012

The Pulse of Craft

Celebrating individuals who have influenced craft's past, present and future.

In this issue, the American Craft Council honors 11 individuals who have created exceptional bodies of work, invented techniques, been formidable teachers, or otherwise made major contributions to studio craft. They are the sages of the field. That might sound pretty antique.

But consider that in graduate school Paul Soldner made what he claimed were the tallest cylinders ever thrown. Employing a technique he called "extended throwing," he gradually climbed onto a stool to work, turning the electric wheel with a foot pedal on a long cord. It must have been a sight! Helen Drutt was a 30-something when she started an organization to serve the new kind of craft in Philadelphia. A few years later she created a context for that work by teaching what was probably the first craft history course in the U.S. Each of the honorees has that kind of story. Toots Zynsky was there in the mud the first summer of Pilchuck, holding her own with the boys; Gyöngy Laky responded to the termination of UC Berkeley's textile courses by founding Fiberworks and becoming its first director at 29. These individuals embody invention, excitement, testing bounds, stepping into the unknown, defining their worlds. The awards honor that constant energy and imagination.

The motivations of a new generation of crafts is another subject in this issue. Dennis Stevens creates a stirring portrait of DIY craft in the context of third-generation feminism. Indie imagery sparks the wallpaper designs of Dan Funderburgh, profiled by Mimi Luse. Gabriel Craig, who wrote about his own work a few issues ago, analyzes the transgressive jewelry of his peer Lauren Kalman. Such artists might be the ACC honorees in another decade or two. The pulse of craft is still pounding away with great vitality. Enjoy!

Janet Chris

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american craft

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www.fsc.org
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LEGAL

American Craft®
(ISSN-0194-8008)
is published bimonthly by
the American Craft Council
72 Spring Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10012-4019
Phone (212) 274-0630
Fax (212) 274-0650
www.craftcouncil.org

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices.

Membership rates: $40 per year and higher, including subscription to American Craft (formerly *Craft Horizons*). Add $15 for Canadian and foreign orders. Address all subscription correspondence to:

American Craft Council
P.O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ
07834-3000
Phone (888) 313-5527

For change of address, give old and new address with zip code. Allow six weeks for change to take effect. The opinions expressed in American Craft are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the American Craft Council. Address unsolicited material to:

American Craft, Editor in Chief
72 Spring Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10012-4019

Material will be handled with care, but the magazine assumes no responsibility for it. American Craft is indexed in the Art Index, Design and Applied Arts Index, and Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Book reviews are also indexed in Book Review Index. Newsstand distribution:

COMAG Marketing Group
155 Village Blvd.
Princeton Junction, NJ 08540

POSTMASTER:
Address changes to:
American Craft, P.O. Box 3000,
Denville, NJ 07834-3000

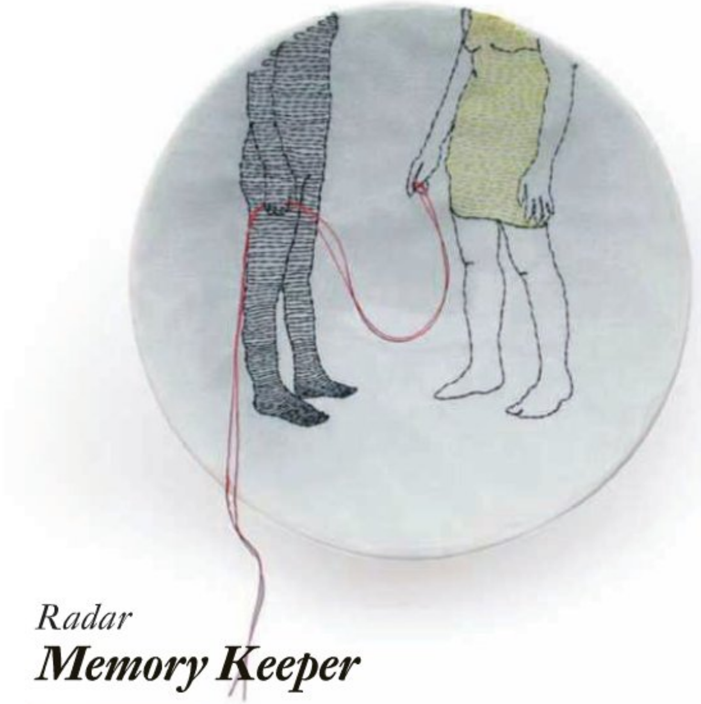
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An up close guide to books, galleries, people & places



1




❷

Radar
Memory Keeper

Diem Chau might be described as a memory keeper. From her carved crayons, such as *Girl in Green* ❷, that reflect on lost innocence, much like a broken crayon, to her embroidered partial figures on stretched cloth that covers discarded dishes ❶, a renewal of an object's previous life, the past is ever-present in her art.

Her own past has undeniably been a major influence. Chau, who was born to a Vietnamese mother and Chinese father, immigrated to the United States in 1986. It was an arrival long overdue. In 1978 Chau's parents attempted to get out of war-ravaged Vietnam. However, they were caught by the Vietnamese coast guard and sentenced to a year each in jail. Chau's mother, who was pregnant with her at the time, was given an early release, and after Chau's birth they applied for U.S. immigration. Sponsored by her uncles, who'd successfully escaped to the U.S., they began the long, slow process of immigration. It took six years before the family could leave Vietnam; they then spent a year in a refugee camp in the Philippines before arriving in Seattle.

"I remember my first impression of the U.S. was, 'Oh, it's not that different here,'" muses Chau. "I heard so many fantasy stories about the U.S. like 'The Gold Mountain' and other grandeurs. I thought it'd be like Candy Land: the trees are made of lollipops, the streets are paved with gold and people fly around on swans. I was also seven and had an active imagination."

This imagination may have sparked Chau's artistic career. She can't remember a time when art wasn't part of her life. ("The pencil was my first toy," she notes.) But it was Chau's father's death when she was in high school that really motivated her. "You only have one life," she says. "Spend it doing what drives you to live."

Chau attended Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle to study painting. Yet the medium left her slightly unsatisfied. "I also wanted to work with non-art materials," she says. "I got tired of preaching to the choir. I love painting; it's a very meditative process, but I couldn't connect with the medium or end result. When I was done with a painting I was done."

By using items from everyday life Chau touches on the fleeting moments of existence, something that all can relate to. The crayons tell the story of childhood innocence while the dishes reflect the bonds that form when people break bread together. Her work continues to head in new directions. While in the past she focused on her own experiences, she is now taking a broader look at human narratives.

"I took a step back from making work that was too personal because I wanted the viewers to be able to connect to it," she says. "It's a balancing act. I've also shifted my issues. Instead of loss, I focus on identity. It's no longer about cultural erosion, but about defining my generation, understanding our differences while acknowledging our past. My work is one continuously evolving piece. I'm trying to capture a stream of consciousness."—**s.s.**

diemchau.com

Hot Spots
Standouts

Gallery shows, listed A–Z by state. View complete calendar: americancraftmag.org

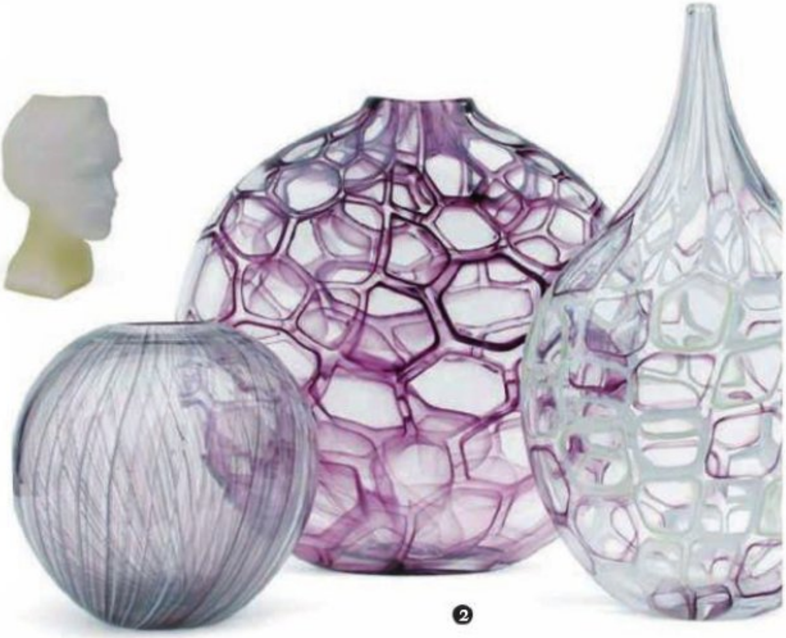
AL / Huntsville
Huntsville Museum of Art
Looking at the Collection: The Elegant Vessel
to Nov. 8
hsvmuseum.org
Stylistically diverse works in wood, glass, metal and clay, evoke a sense of refined beauty.

AZ / Tucson
Tohono Chul Park
Wish You Were Here
to Nov. 16
tohonochulpark.org
Artists from anywhere in the world construct picture-perfect fiber-art postcards referencing trips in Arizona.

CA / Oceanside
Oceanside Museum of Art
Fabric of Survival: The Fabric Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz
to Oct. 25
oma-online.org
Through embroidered panels, Krinitz poignantly narrates her remarkable story of living through the Holocaust.



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Product Placement
Solos Glass

If a wall clock by Solos Glass strikes you as oddly familiar, that's because in a past life it may have been your grandma's ashtray. "Someone will say, 'Oh, my mom had one of those when I was a kid,'" says Nanda Soderberg, co-owner with his wife, Rebecca Saunders, of the Richmond, Virginia-based studio. These unique pieces are made from vintage pressed-glass wares that the two hunt down at thrift shops and online, then heat and spin out flat. The process turns candy dishes and punch bowls into witty objects in a delightful variety of shapes, textures and colors–lime, cobalt, amber, pink, ruby. "It's pretty cool, how it transforms them," says Soderberg, adding that customers appreciate their function. "People like to have a use for things."

Soderberg, 37, began blowing glass as a student at the University of Hawaii and honed his skills at hot shops in Seattle and Southern California before earning his M.F.A. at Virginia Commonwealth University, where lately he's been an adjunct instructor in glass. Saunders, 33, studied glass at the Rhode Island School of Design and sculpture at the San Francisco Art Institute, and teaches art in local public schools. Married by an Elvis impersonator two years ago at the Graceland Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas, the couple blend retro charm with a sophisticated design sensibility in their home decor items, which have been featured at venues ranging from Barneys New York to the "Searchlight" talent showcase at the American Craft Council Show in Baltimore; this fall, they'll be at the Craft + Design Show at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond (November 21–22). Including elegant blown vessels, such as Double Bubble Set ❸ and whimsical small sculptures, such as Purple Cane and Murrine Set ❷, as well as the clocks, their line is diverse, yet all Solos products share a distinctive modern aesthetic.

A kitschy ceramic bust of a turbaned man inspired the couple's recent series of mold-blown Head Vases ❶. Now they're eyeing other unlikely objects as molds–a hunk of gutter pipe, the cowboy boot of a neighbor's kid. "It's opened us up to being more playful."—J.L.

solosglass.com

CA / San Francisco
San Francisco International Airport
San Francisco Art Commission Collection
ongoing
sfartscommission.org/pubart
The art of craft is abundant among the 75 permanently sited objects throughout the airport's lobbies and terminals.

CT / New Haven
Creative Arts Workshop
Celebration of American Crafts
Oct. 30–Dec. 24
creativeartsworkshop.org
This annual juried show and sale–just in time for the holidays–offers some of the finest 3-D work by over 300 artists.

DE / Wilmington
Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts
Hratch Babikian: Origins, Visited
to Oct. 18
thedcca.org
Motivated by the coastal setting of his youth, the Lebanese-born artist creates exotic jewelry and sculpture combining gold, silver, stones and wood.

DC / Washington
❶ Renwick Gallery
Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009
to Jan. 3
americanart.si.edu/renwick
A biennial exhibition series, this year's show features works by ceramists Christyl Boger and SunKoo Yuh, fiber artist Mark Newport and glass artist Mary Van Cline, including her *Cycles of Relationship of Time*.



❶

Solos Glass photos/Rebecca Saunders Soderberg, Van Cline photo/Rob Vinnedge.







❶

Shop Talk

Things You Can Touch

Duane Reed Gallery
4729 McPherson Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63108
314-361-4100
duanereedgallery.com

After years working as a ballroom dance instructor, Duane Reed ❶ put away his dancing shoes and focused on a different kind of creative outlet. Having taken time away from the art world he fell in love with as a student, Reed "could think of nothing except working with fine art." In 1994 he opened the Duane Reed Gallery and since then has been presenting "objects that have craft roots," such as Margaret Keelan's *Journey* (detail) ❷ and Bonnie Seeman's *Untitled Gravy Boat and Tray* ❸, along with paintings, drawings and photography. He never looked back.



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What inspired you to open an art gallery?
I was fortunate to have gone to William Jewell College just outside of Kansas City. The school's fine arts program rivals that of many larger universities. For a Midwestern boy from a small town, that was eye-opening. I was determined to work for a gallery and learn the business, which I did. In 1994 I was able to open my own gallery in St. Louis. It was located on the upper two floors of an old apartment building. Amazingly, we were able to mount some incredible shows, including exhibitions of the works of Dale Chihuly, Albert Paley, Wendell Castle and William Morris. I still can't believe I did it.

Your gallery has a special focus on fiber, glass and ceramics. What first attracted you to these mediums?



❸

I am absolutely taken by them. I see a magic in these mediums that comes out of the gentle touch of the hand or even out of what seems to be a technical impossibility. How can someone not be attracted to these things? I have gravitated in a nearly obsessive way toward things you can touch. Perhaps it's the child in me.

Congratulations on celebrating your 15th anniversary. How do you think the art world has changed in the past decade and a half?
Fifteen years ago, you could never have convinced me that someone might make an art purchase over the Internet simply by viewing an image. I resisted in the beginning, only to later become dependent on the "computer technicians" that seem to overpopulate our high schools today. Technology has been knocking on the door, forcing us to adjust to it. I suppose that it makes artwork more accessible to a wider public, though I can't help thinking it takes away some of the magic of the experience. To do business in these times, it's important that we somehow address the power of this means of communication but also create a personal experience.

You've recently moved to the Central West End neighborhood. How is that going?
The gallery started in the West End and now it's back home. The area is teeming with wonderful restaurants, shops, galleries and magnificent historical homes. We are now located in a much larger space with very high ceilings, concrete floors and the capacity to show large-scale paintings and sculpture. It opens us to new ideas and energy. St. Louis seems excited, our artists are excited and we are thrilled.—S.M.

❷



HI / Honolulu
The Contemporary Museum
Yoshihiro Suda
to Oct. 18
tcmhi.org
With surprising realism in true-to-life scale, Suda has carved, then hand-painted, fragile wood sculptures based on tropical flowers in Hawaii.

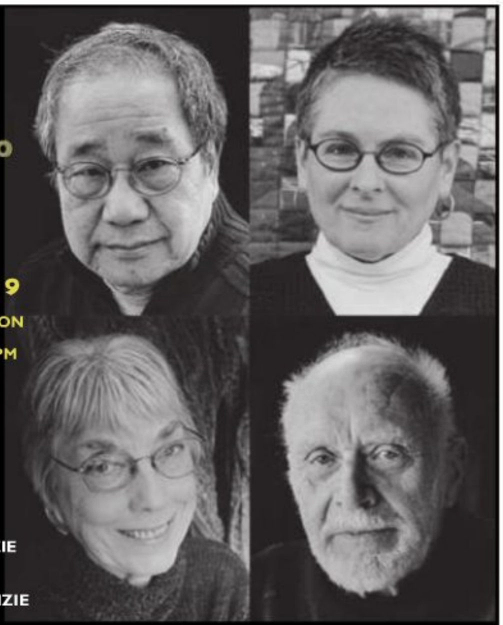
ID / Boise
Boise Art Museum
Ann Weber: Corrugated
to Nov. 8
boiseartmuseum.org
Weber's towering fibrous sculptures made of cardboard resemble baskets, pods, gourds and organic spires, elevating the material from its common associations.

KY / Louisville
Vonfire Gallery at Glassworks
Mark Payton
Oct. 2–Nov. 28
louisvilleglassworks.com/vonfire
Using strong, heat-resistant borosilicate glass, Payton creates the ornate details of his large flame-worked sculpture.

MA / Boston
❷ Society of Arts and Crafts
POP Craft
to Oct. 22
societyofcrafts.org
Works in various media, including Karen Shapiro's ceramic *Campbell's Soup Can,* reveal ways in which contemporary artists have absorbed elements of the Pop Art movement, typically bold, sometimes political, always interesting.

Duane Reed photos/Glenn Scrivner.

TWO BY TWO



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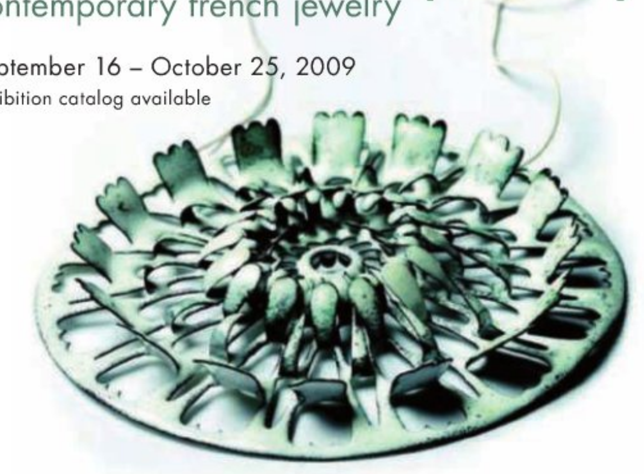
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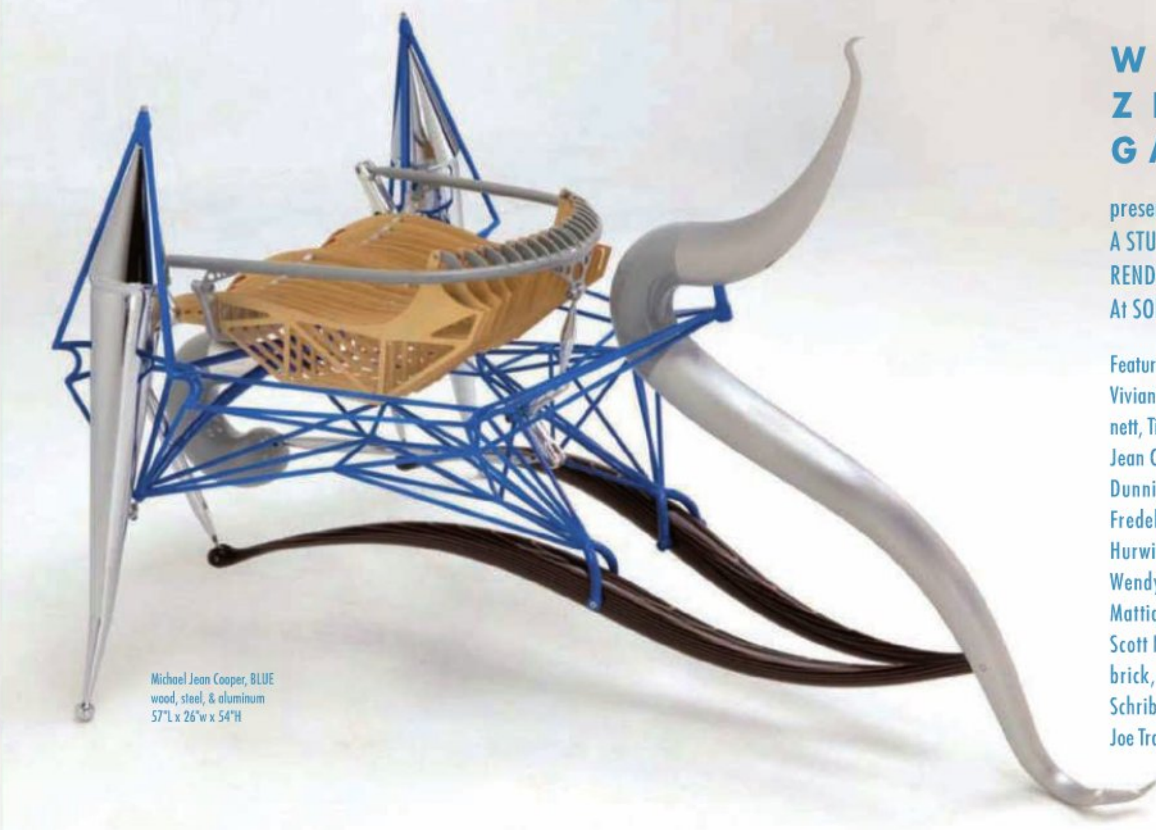


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❶

Preview

Earthy Perfection

American Museum of Ceramic Art
Harrison McIntosh: A Timeless Legacy
Pomona, California
September 12, 2009 – January 9, 2010
ceramicmuseum.org

The life and work of Harrison McIntosh, a quiet legend in the rich, often flamboyant history of California craft, is being celebrated in this retrospective covering 60 years of his pottery and sculpture and coinciding with his 95th birthday. Born in Vallejo, California, McIntosh showed a talent for art at a young age and was encouraged by his parents. He was introduced to clay by Glen Lukens at the University of Southern California in 1940. Later, after he had served in World War II, he studied with Richard Petterson at the Claremont Graduate School, attended a Bernard Leach seminar at Mills College and enrolled in a workshop with the Bauhaus potter Marguerite Wildenhain. There was exposure to the Japanese Mingei tradition as represented by Shoji Hamada, whose throwing demonstrations on his famous 1952–53 U.S. tour McIntosh observed. He was also interested in architecture (in the 30s he had helped persuade his parents to have their house designed by the avant-garde architect Richard Neutra) and in the developments in West Coast interior and exterior design in the postwar years.

McIntosh set up his first studio in Claremont in 1954 with fellow potter Rupert Deese and proceeded to produce pottery that blended the diverse design and craft influences in his background into a style distinctly his own, characterized by balanced proportions and subtle but graphic decorative elements. He made his technical choices early: a single stoneware body, cone 5 glazes and oxidation firing.

The show at AMOCA highlights the variety of McIntosh's vessels: groupings of elegant bottles in subdued colors, such as *Double Gourd Bottles* ❶; a lidded jar resembling an ottoman in turquoise and white; platters with designs that are geometric but not rigidly symmetrical; a black-and-white compote dish swelling out gracefully from its cylindrical foot. Impeccably crafted, these works seem perfect yet retain enough surface variations to remind the viewer these are handmade objects. In the late 60s, McIntosh ventured into sculpture, creating closed round or egg-shaped or podlike forms, which he would mount on wood blocks or metal bases. As these evolved, the artist would attach his rounded forms to a mirrored metal surface that reflected the object above, offering the illusion of its floating in space.

Unlike Peter Voulkos, another California ceramist exposed to similar influences but whose gestural style seems the very opposite of his own, McIntosh seldom taught. He was attracted to industrial design, however, and from 1970 to 1980 he was a consultant for the Mikasa Corporation of Japan, collaborating with his wife, Marguerite, on dinnerware and crystal designs for the company.

The artist's disciplined adherence to a cohesive, simplified aesthetic was not unappreciated. Hazel Bray, former curator of art at the Oakland Museum, once remarked: "Over the years his work has accumulated a virtuosity that has become as rich as a Bach fugue in its variations upon a theme. Resisting superficial flirtations with novelty or partially realized expressions is a mark of his strength of personal conviction and maturity." Bray was not the only appreciator resorting to music to characterize McIntosh's oeuvre. In an article in American Craft in 1985, the ceramist and writer Mac McCloud observed: "The aerodynamic shapes of McIntosh's pots resemble the compositions of Erik Satie—sophisticated, complete, airy and instantly rhapsodic."—B.S.

The hardcover catalog is $39.95.

MA / Brockton
❸ Fuller Craft Museum
The Perfect Fit: Shoes Tell Stories
to Jan. 3
fullercraft.org
A mix of footwear, like Jan Hopkins's *Orange Peel High Heels,* honors Brockton's legacy as the world's one-time shoe capital.

MI / Detroit
Pewabic Pottery
Peter Lenzo and Andy Nasisse: On the Edge Between Whimsy and Fear
to Nov. 1
pewabic.com
Lenzo's face jugs and memory pots are different from yet similar to Nasisse's more enigmatic expressions of human form.

MO / St. Louis
St. Louis Artists' Guild
Roxanne Phillips: Blending Traditions
to Nov. 6
stlouisartistsguild.org
Hand-printed fabrics are cut, sectioned and quilted to adorn the gallery walls.

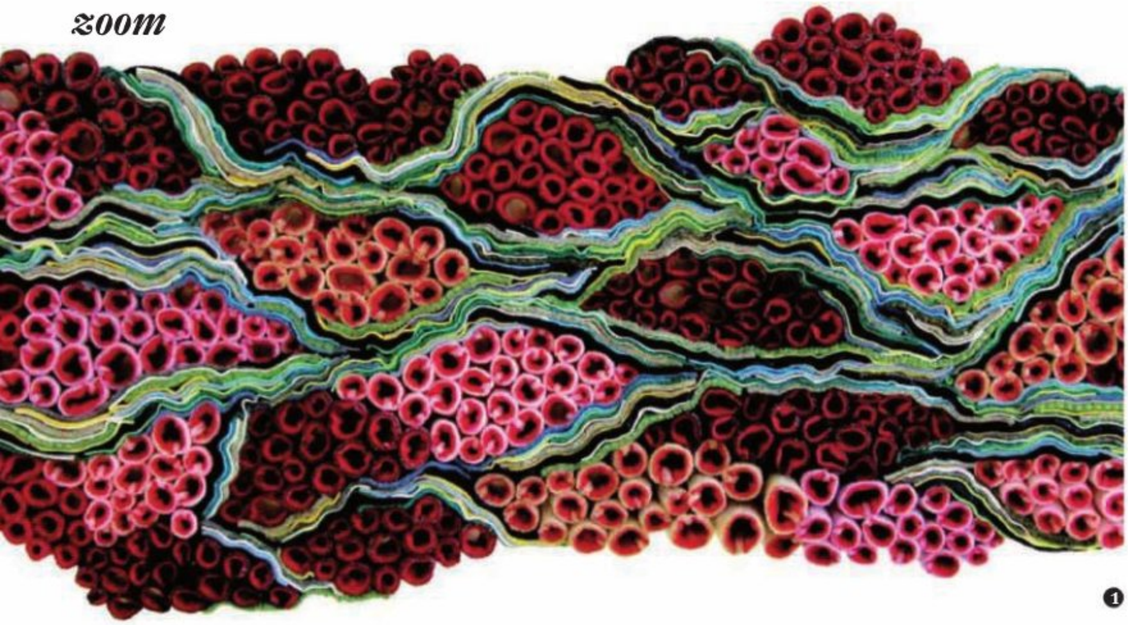
NE / Lincoln
Elder Gallery, Nebraska Wesleyan University
The Art of Fine Craft 2009
Oct. 1–Nov. 8
luxcenter.org
Viewers are engaged through a wealth of concepts and processes at this juried show.

NY / New York
Museum of Arts and Design
Read My Pins: The Madeleine Albright Collection
to Jan. 31
madmuseum.org
More than 200 of Secretary Albright's pins explore jewelry as a political and social tool.

❸



McIntosh photo/Cynthia Madrigal.


❶

People & Places
News from Everywhere

Check out
First Week, a trompe-l'oeil installation by **Mary Temple** on view through December on a fourth-floor landing in the **Museum of Arts and Design,** is the first in a series of "Art Encounters," a joint project with Benjamin Moore & Co. that commissions artists to paint the stairwells of MAD... A monumental ceramic head form by **Jun Kaneko** is a highlight of the new Peter Kiewet Foundation Sculpture Garden at the **Joslyn Art Museum** in Omaha, NE, home city to the Japanese-born sculptor since 1986... Imagine cocktails and hors d'oeuvres against the backdrop of spectacular art-glass windows in a historic home designed by **Frank Lloyd Wright.** "After Hours at Wright's Robie House" is one of the new programs at the celebrated 1910 Chicago residence, designed to provide viewers with a personal experience. The series is made possible by a $250,000 MacArthur Foundation grant to the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust (GoWright.org).

Gifts & Grants
The architect **Sidney Swidler** fell in love with contemporary ceramics in the 1980s, and eventually amassed some 800 pieces by 300 artists from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan and Australia. Now retired, he has made a gift of his collection to the **Crocker Art Museum** of Sacramento, CA, where it will be featured as one of the inaugural exhibits in an addition set to open next year.

As artists struggle through tough economic times, some relief comes in the form of grants from organizations like the **New York Foundation for the Arts,** which this year gave $7,000 each to 134 individuals for excellence in their respective disciplines, including **Emily Barletta,** who made *Horizon* ❶, and 13 others in the crafts category (For the complete list, visit nyfa.org)... The largest annual artist fellowships in the nation currently come from the **Pew Charitable Trusts,** which in 2009 awarded $60,000 each (an increase of $10,000 over last year) to 12 Philadelphia-area recipients in painting, playwriting, and folk and traditional arts–among them **Vera Nakonechny,** a master of Ukrainian embroidery (pewtrusts.org)... **The Kresge Foundation**'s new fellowship program, administered by the College for Creative Studies, has awarded $25,000 apiece to 18 Detroit-area visual artists, including **Sioux Trujillo,** who made *Rhino Squid* ❸. (collegeforcreativestudies.edu).


❷

Awards & Honors
Diane and **Marc Grainer** will be honored for their support of the **Mint Museum of Craft + Design** at the annual Mint Condition gala October 3 in Charlotte, NC, where the museum's Founders' Circle will present them with its McColl Award. Avid collectors and advocates of fine craft, the Grainers have played leadership roles in organizations such as the James Renwick Alliance, Furniture Society and American Craft Council... **The Craft Emergency Relief Fund** has received an award for "leadership, creative thinking and outstanding›

NC / Charlotte
RedSky Gallery
Shane Fero
to Nov. 12
redskygallery.com
Fero's flame-worked objects catch and hold the eye.

PA / Lancaster
Kevin Lehman's Pottery
Strictly Functional Pottery National
to Oct. 25
strictlyfunctionalpotterynational.net
Useful objects–approachable, recognizable and valuable–are juried into the Market House Craft Center's popular presentation for the 17th year.

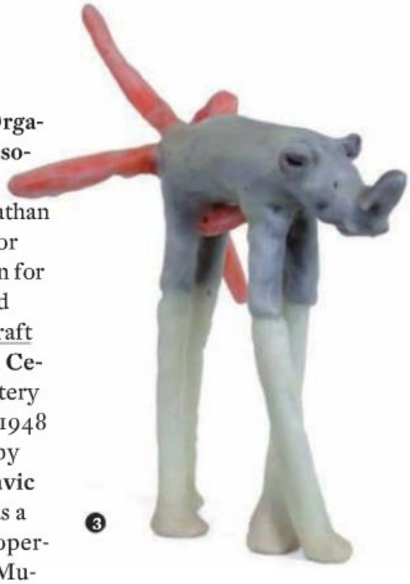
PA / Philadelphia
❹ **Philadelphia Museum of Art**
Wrought & Crafted: Jewelry and Metalwork 1900 to the Present
to Jan. 31
philamuseum.org
Recent museum acquisitions of 20th- and 21st-century hollowware, sculpture and jewelry, including Samuel Yellin's *Lock, Key and Handle,* celebrate Philadelphia's rich heritage in the field of metalwork.

TN / Gatlinburg
Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts
Women in Wood
Oct. 16–Jan. 2
arrowmont.org
The inroads made by women into the discipline of woodworking are illustrated through the turned and constructed objects of 27 gifted artists.


❹

Lynch-McWhite photo/Mike Ritter.

service" from the **Craft Organization Development Association.** CERF also got a $75,000 grant from the Nathan Cummings Foundation for spearheading the Coalition for Artists' Preparedness and Emergency Response. (craftemergency.org)... **Heath Ceramics,** the California pottery begun by Edith Heath in 1948 and lately reinvigorated by new owners **Robin Petravic** and **Catherine Bailey,** was a finalist for one of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's 2009 National Design Awards, in the Corporate and Institutional Achievement category (the prize ultimately went to the **Walker Art Center**). In July First Lady **Michelle Obama** hosted a White House luncheon for the finalists and winners, who will be feted in New York City during National Design Week October 18–24. (www.nationaldesignawards.org)... The modernist metalsmith **Florence Resnikoff** has been made an honorary lifetime member of the **Northern California Enamel Guild,** one of just four in the group's history. A professor emerita at California College of the Arts and a state-designated Living Treasure of California, Resnikoff recently had three of her pieces—a pin and pendant from the 1980s and a bowl made in 2004—acquired for the permanent collection of the Smithsonian's **Renwick Gallery**.



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Passings

Otto Heino, an iconic California designer-craftsman known for his earthy pottery and legendary collaboration with his wife, Vivika, died July 16. The son of Finnish immigrants, Heino enrolled on the G.I. Bill in a pottery class taught by Vivika Timeriasieff at the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts. Married in 1950, the couple produced and taught ceramics on the East and West coasts before settling in 1973 in Ojai, CA. Martha Drexler Lynn wrote in her American Craft review of a 1996 exhibition of their work at the Frank Lloyd Gallery, "In their adherence to the ideal that 'what you give away you keep forever,' they exemplified an openness and accessibility in both their production and way of life that was at the heart of the midcentury studio craft movement." The Heinos were made Fellows of the American Craft Council in 1990. After Vivika's death in 1995, Otto famously succeeded in perfecting a rare yellow glaze, said to have been lost from ancient China, that the two had labored for years to reformulate. He once said, "I wanted a person to see a pot and know it was a good potter that made it, [that] he knew his glazes and he knew how to fire, so it's a complete, honest pot."

Dorothy Weiss, a dealer who showcased some of the best sculptural ceramics and glass by contemporary artists for over 25 years in San Francisco, died May 30 at her home in Piedmont, CA, at the age of 89. She was a partner in the gallery Meyer Breier Weiss

Trujillo photo/Joseph Ferraro.

from 1977 to 1984, after which she operated the Dorothy Weiss Gallery until her retirement in 2000.

Transitions
An American will become artistic director of the **Stedelijk Museum** (Dutch for "municipal museum") in Amsterdam in January. **Ann Goldstein** has since 2001 been senior curator at the **Museum of Contemporary Art** in Los Angeles, where she worked for over 25 years. She succeeds **Gijs van Tuyl** at the Stedelijk, which is set to reopen its renovated building in 2010... In other news from the Netherlands, **Yvonne Joris** ❹ will depart as head of the Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch (no relation to the Amsterdam institution) as of January 1. Joris became director of the museum in 1988, when it was called the Museum Het Kruithuis... **Wyona Lynch-McWhite** ❷, former director of the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University, is the new head of the **Fuller Craft Museum** in Brockton, MA. Founding director **Gretchen Keyworth** remains as director emeritus and chief curator... **Hunter O'Hanian** stepped down as president of the **Anderson Ranch Arts Center** in Colorado to become vice president for institutional advancement at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston.—J.L.

❹



❺



TX / Houston
❺ Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
Celebrating our Creative Spirit
Oct. 3–Dec. 24
crafthouston.org
The Texas Federation of Fiber Artists presents an exceptional display–over 90 pieces–of original, expressive works in the medium, such as Lucia Lavilla-Havelin's *Prasinophyta,* in this exhibition juried by Tim Harding.

VT / Shelburne
Shelburne Museum
The Bright and Shining Light of Irreverence: Richard Saja and the Historically Inaccurate School
to Oct. 25
shelburnemuseum.org
Inspired by needlework, quilts and silhouette portraits in the Shelburne's collections, the New York textile designer, with his cheeky take on tradition, transforms the museum's Kalkin House into a 19th-century salon.

WA / Bellevue
Bellevue Arts Museum
Judy Hill: The Self Transparent, from the Collection of Driek and Michael Zirinsky
to Jan. 3
bellevuearts.org
Viewers are given a rare opportunity to see two decades of the artist's largely autobiographical figurines that integrate the crackled surface of raku ceramic with cold-mold glass.

Joris photo/Joep Lennarts Fotografie, Lavilla-Havelin photo/Seale Studio.



Voices

How are you coping with the economic downturn?

We are finding that people place a high priority on education in time of recession. Our 12-week and 9-month courses are running at full capacity, and the shorter summer workshops are down only slightly against last year. We seem to be weathering the storm in relative safety.
—**Peter Korn**, *executive director, Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, Rockport, Maine*

We are continuing to show only the very best work, and we have not curtailed our rather ambitious exhibition schedule. We've been through economic downturns before and this one, though it has felt somewhat deeper, now seems to be turning around. San Francisco has not been hit as badly as some other places. We understand that most people have to be more careful with their money, and so we try to show that a well-chosen piece of craft can be a good decision. During our 18 years in the field, in good times and bad, we always try to widen our audience and look for new ways to reach people. This could be improving our website and developing new online connections. I think the main thing is not to panic. If you are doing a good job, people will support what you do.
—**Elizabeth Shypertt**, *co-owner, Velvet da Vinci jewelry gallery, San Francisco, California*

We have been rather fortunate. We did see a drop around the holidays, but things have picked up and we are now doing quite well. If this were not the case I guess I would have to learn to rob banks.
—**Josh Urso**, *furniture and lighting designer, Jersey City, New Jersey*

For the first time since I left Seattle Art Museum over 10 years ago, I've no waiting list of future projects. A retrospective exhibition of the work of a Seattle artist that I was to curate, and the accompanying catalog I was to write, have been cancelled. It was always an expensive proposition, with high shipping and publication costs. The small museums for which I often work are likely to be financially stressed even in better times. My last big project, co-editing the anthology *Choosing Craft: The Artist's Viewpoint* (2009), was funded by grants. My current work, co-editing a volume of letters of the painter Morris Graves, is proceeding without adequate funding. The private donors we were counting on to support research and transcription have not materialized to the extent we expected. The economic downturn is the explanation we prefer to cite, since it gives us hope of a future windfall.
—**Vicki Halper**, *freelance curator, Seattle, Washington*

I am a sustainable designer, so the economic downturn has not had a devastating affect on me. I believe that is directly related to my life and work style; I use all recycled materials in my designs, therefore my costs are low and my footprint light. I also believe that the economy is making people aware of the repercussions of their actions on a broader scope, which can only help to bring a positive change for future generations.
—**Erica White**, *apparel designer, M.A. candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Luckily the downturn has not greatly affected my business. I began doing mostly private commissions three years ago, and my clientele remains interested in one-of-a-kind sculptures and functional pieces. I think if I were still primarily selling functional and decorative glass pieces wholesale through fine craft stores, my business might have taken a steep decline. It seems that those in the higher income brackets are still doing projects, while the rest are closely watching what they spend on gifts and functional pieces.
—**Peter Zelle**, *glass artist, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

There are now even more opportunities to ally ourselves with the vibrant sustainability movements that have been challenging bubble-growth capitalism for some time–slow food, buy local, fair trade, etc. We are known local makers of meaningful stuff people can use, very relevant as the economy moves people to think more about how they are living and what structures they are supporting. It's a matter of making the case and being accessible, a mix of old-fashioned events (kiln openings and group studio tours) and new technologies (social networking, etc.). The downturn might in fact be our turn.
—**Mark Shapiro**, *studio potter, Worthington, Massachusetts*

Penland is a retreat, and we want our students and instructors to be as far from financial worries as possible, so we've done everything we can to minimize visible effects. However, we have been affected by the economy. We have made cuts to balance our budget but have managed to avoid eliminating jobs. Our staff is not getting raises; we have been trimming services and postponing things that can wait. As of this writing, our enrollment is at 88 percent of capacity, down only a few percentage points from last year, which shows how vital our programs are. We all believe strongly in our mission and are stretching to ensure that those we serve come first. The energy on campus is powerful and that is what we want to focus on.
—**Jean W. McLaughlin**, *director, Penland School of Crafts, North Carolina*

Illustration/Tamara Shopsin.



Alex Gabriel Bernstein, *Steel Moon*

SOFA Chicago

November 6 – 8

Alex Gabriel Bernstein

Toshio Iezumi

Kathleen Holmes

Kait Rhoads

Naomi Shioya

Ethan Stern

Sasha Zhitneva

Chappell Gallery

www.chappellgallery.com



Toshio Iezumi, *M081001*



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Preview

Bonds of Glass

Heller Gallery
Susan Taylor Glasgow: Love Hurts
New York, New York
September 12 – October 10, 2009

Susan Taylor Glasgow is known for her depictions of domestic bliss as little more than well-crafted illusion, so her transition from the comforts of needle and thread to the brittle brilliance of fire and glass is a statement in itself. Raised to cook and sew, the sculptor does both, but in a medium that is neither edible nor wearable.

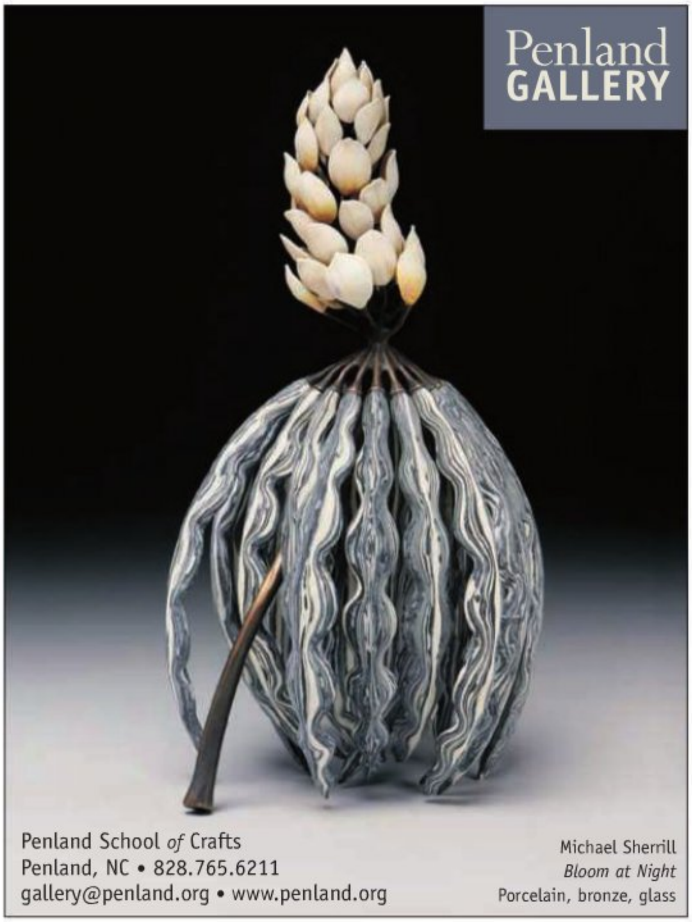
Stitching together glass panels with ribbon and thread, she has fashioned toasters, bras and other feminine icons, such as *Chandelier Dress* ❶. But in this show, Glasgow unhinges the concept to focus on insights she gained from working with homeless and abused women as an artist-in-residence at the Pittsburgh Glass Center. With their participation, she created *The Communal Nest*, a room-size take on avian domesticity. The willow branches nestled amid glass twigs suggest the last remnants of a telling substitution—the breakable for the pliable, the rigid for the flexible—conveying that home sweet durable home is a fragile place indeed. The glass-for-wood transposition offers clarity over opacity: you could see through this nest, past the facade of picket fences and manicured lives.

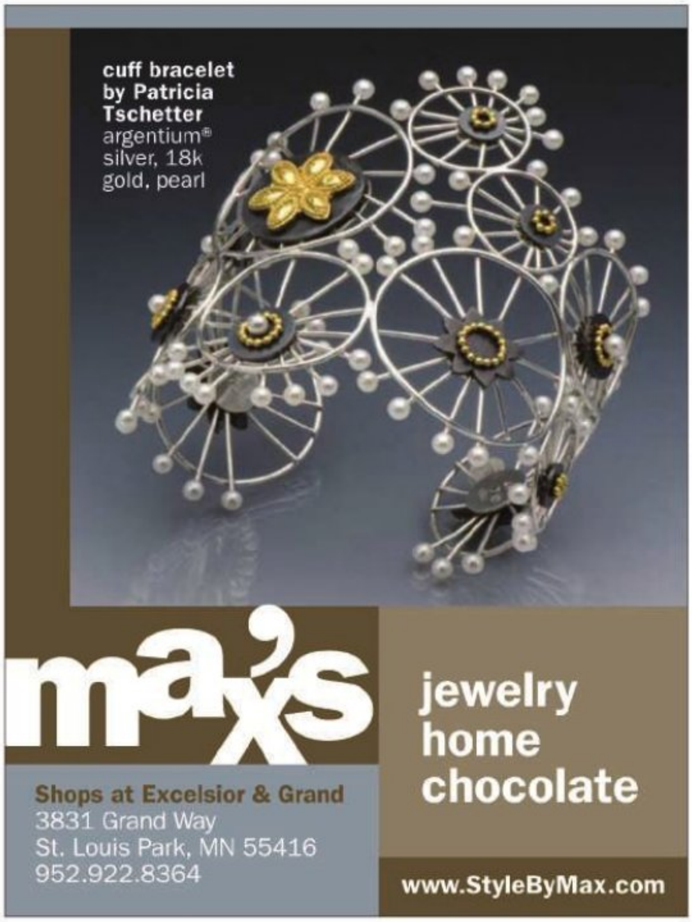
"Glasgow's recent work has definitely adopted a more serious tone," says gallery owner Douglas Heller. "Seeing women trapped in violent, destructive relationships has led her to profoundly alter her visual language." In *It's Easy to Love the Rose*, a work in Glasgow's new series, a hand-linked glass chain connects a teapot that looks more like a weathered wineskin to a perfect little teacup. The piece illustrates Glasgow's interpretation of a profound insight all parents probably wish their children understood: we are inextricably linked to the choices we make.

"Whomever people invite into their life dramatically shapes their future," Glasgow says. "I've selected objects that have a natural domestic association and made one of the pair as beautiful as I could make it and the other as ugly, and then permanently bound them with glass chain. The enabler and the dependent. Abuser and victim. Purity of thought chained to constant self-doubt." For an artist who usually ponders the lighter ironies of home life, imagining the anguish of a battered wife, must have been difficult. But though Glasgow works in a fantastical medium she is a realist at heart.—**MIKE MARTIN**

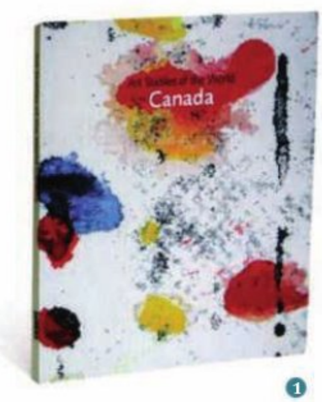
Mike Martin is a writer based in Columbia, Missouri.

Photo/Art Smith Photography.


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Books

O Canada!

❶ Art Textiles of the World: Canada
By Sandra Alfoldy, Alan C. Elder, Lisa Vinebaum, J. R. Carpenter

Telos Art Publishing
Brighton, England
$73
telos.net

Openness to technology, responsiveness to the environment and a capacity for contemplation, are among the qualities of the 20 Canadian artists chosen by publisher Matthew Koumis to represent a composite of the textile arts in their far-flung land. The book is the 13th Koumis has published in the Art Textiles of the World series.

Sandra Alfoldy, who teaches craft history, traces Canada's textile history, touching on the contributions of Native peoples, French and British colonizers, and immigrants. Alan C. Elder, curator at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, compared Canadian textile art in general to the *catalogne,* a traditional striped fabric: "The work of our artists combines transnational concepts with regional approaches; it is flexible–both physically and functionally–and it relates to individuals–both makers and consumers."

J. R. Carpenter, a writer and artist, describes how the Canadian textile community networks through schools or through projects launched by institutions: "Textile production is basically the struggle to join many small parts into one large whole....Mapping our movement through schools of thought and circuits of community reveals a substratum of connections that stretch across the great swathes of country in between us." Contending that textiles implicate the body, Lisa Vinebaum, an artist and theorist, discusses those among the 20–Kai Chan and Laura Vickerson, for example–whose work engages the body.

Among the featured artists, a number of whom were born elsewhere, are accomplished weavers like Marcel Marois and Joanne Soroka; mixed-media artists who favor installation like Joanna Staniszkis and Jennifer Angus; and devotees of the stitch, such as Dorothy Caldwell. Technology prods, among others, Barbara Layne, who makes electronic jackets and Jacquard weavings with LEDs; and recycling plays a role in the work of Mindy Yan Miller, whose installations using such items as Coca-Cola cans comment on labor, memory and landscape, and of Barb Hunt, who reflects on death and war through used fabrics.

Though these artists have much in common with their U.S. counterparts, one puts down this book persuaded that Canadians bring a distinct flavor to textiles.—B.S.

Contemporary Craft Galleries







Hibberd McGrath Gallery

101 N. Main Street, PO Box 7638, Breckenridge, Colorado 80424
(970) 453-6391 • www.hibberdmcgrath.com

L'Attitude Gallery

218 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 927-4400 • www.lattitudegallery.com

Obsidian Gallery

4320 N. Campbell Avenue, #130, Tucson, Arizona 85718
(520) 577-3598 • www.obsidian-gallery.com

Vermont Artisan Designs & Gallery 2

106 Main Street, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
(802) 257-7044 • www.BuyVermontArt.com

Weyrich Gallery/The Rare Vision Art Galerie

2935-D Louisiana N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110
(505) 883-7410 • www.weyrichgallery.com

White Bird Gallery

Box 502 N. Hemlock Street, Cannon Beach, Oregon 97110
(503) 436-2681 • www.whitebirdgallery.com

photos, top to bottom:

Anne Forbes at Hibberd McGrath Gallery
Robin & John Gumaelius at White Bird Gallery
Steve and Katia Pflipsen at Obsidian Gallery



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Council News

American Craft Council Conference:
Creating a New Craft Culture
October 15–17, 2009
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Council will host an interactive conference, bringing together dynamic voices in the field and beyond to discuss craft's role in a changing world. The event, which will take place at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, will feature such distinguished speakers as Richard Sennett, professor of sociology at New York University and the London School of Economics and author of *The Craftsman* (see page 48); Rob Walker, columnist for the *New York Times Magazine* and author of *Buying In: The Secret Dialogue Between What We Buy and Who We Are;* Garth Clark, curator, scholar, historian and gallerist; Sandra Alfoldy, associate professor of craft history at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; and Sonya Clark, chair of craft and material studies at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond. For complete information on the conference agenda, speakers and registration, visit craftcouncil.org/conference09.

At the Salon
The Council's 2009 Salon Series program kicked off on July 22, exploring the topic "Craft's Contribution to a Sustainable World" with Father Andrew More O'Connor, an artist and Diocesian priest in the Bronx, New York, discussing his innovative project Goods of Conscience ❶. By employing Guatemalan Mayan weavers who hand sew well-made, attractive and comfortable apparel, the venture benefits the disadvantaged and seeks "to enhance the spirit of worker and wearer alike." The final program, Bamboo Bike Project, took place on August 12, with Marty Odlin, co-founder and engineer of the Bamboo Bike Studio and assistant director of the Education Center for Sustainable Engineering at Columbia University, and Justin Aguinaldo, a New York bicycle messenger who brought his knowledge of bicycle mechanics to the project. They discussed the history of the endeavor, in which a model for social entrepreneurship was developed to utilize a renewable material, bamboo, available to many right in their backyards.

Baltimore Here We Come!
The Council is pleased to announce that at next year's American Craft Show in Baltimore (February 25–28) two exceptional schools–Rhode Island School of Design and Savannah College of Art and Design–will present their top students' work in the "School to Market" portion of the show. Look for more soon on this largest juried, indoor craft show in the nation at craftcouncil.org.



The Cold Truth

STORY BY
Hongtao Zhou

My ice furniture performance last winter on Lake Mendota in Madison, Wisconsin, carried multiple art/educational goals concerning sustainability.

Furniture's life cycle usually starts with consuming natural resources (energy, materials, etc.) and ends with environmental aftereffects (deforestation, CO_2, chemical emission, landfill, etc.). The ice furniture, however, was derived harmlessly from Mother Nature as defined by local climate and natural resources. It completed a sustainable life cycle with minimum environmental impact.

I regarded the cold winter, snow, water and lake surface as my energy source, raw material and factory. Last January, working only with my hands, I scooped up water from open areas of the lake (lakeshore or abandoned ice-fishing holes) and mixed it with fresh snow in a bucket. Then I placed the slush on the cold lake surface to shape the furniture feet in sequence. Once the cold wind froze them hard to the surface, I continued to add more slush to the feet to make legs, stretchers, seats, seat backs and a tabletop. The furniture set grew up from the lake surface into the air in about five days (I worked six hours a day in the cold wind with an average temperature of 15 degrees Fahrenheit). When the tables and chairs were completed, I made some snow bowls and placed them on top of the table.

The show drew attention from the local community because I started at the shoreline location of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Memorial Union Terrace. Many visitors stopped by–interviewing me, taking pictures, trying the cold ice chairs and even eating ice cream in the snow bowls. The ice furniture started to connect the lake, the

Photos/courtesy of Hongtao Zhou.

land, the air, the people and my idea of a green furniture life cycle. The Terrace shoreline became a place for enjoying winter fun and for learning. Responding to changes in the weather, the furniture would melt back into the lake and become a part of the water body again. Its beautiful green life cycle would be completed. I hoped the climate furniture would increase awareness that we can make a sustainable world with less, or without negative, impact.

As global warming is melting the polar ice, the world has no way to escape the impact. Several visitors told me that Madison's winter has become warmer and less predictable in recent decades. The ice furniture melted earlier than I expected: the whole life cycle was finished in early February. However, visitors continued to come look at the ruin, and some of them tried to repair or rebuild the pieces. But the winter was leaving earlier; the furniture reacted to the warmer temperature.

This past summer, documentation of the ice furniture life cycle was displayed on the Terrace, and it still interested many people along the lake shoreline. Some of the kids asked, "Where is the ice furniture?" I said, "They are back home and everywhere in the lake. They have completed their green life cycle and are now preparing for the next generation."

This winter, another tortuous ice furniture set will be built, more "melting looking," and certainly it could melt earlier than last year. This would remind people of the project last year as well as the increasingly severe environmental issues. The set may look like dancing furniture. Maybe it is the last dance of the current industrial world, or of human civilization, if we do not change the way we live.

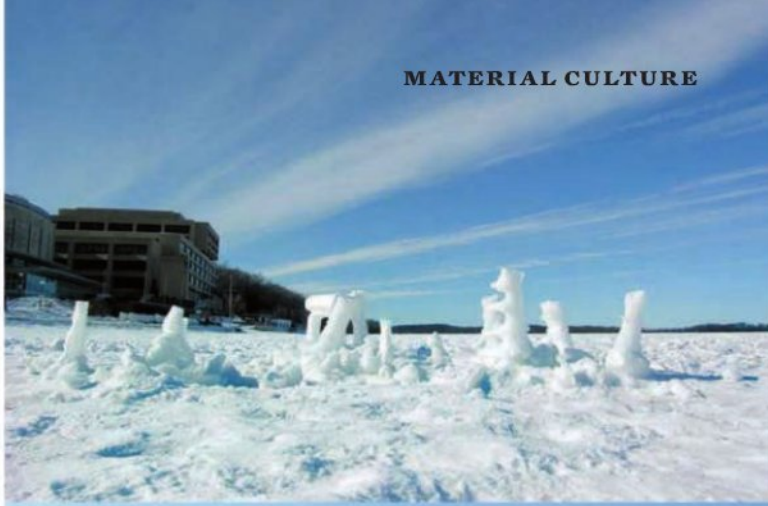
Hongtao Zhou (pronounced home-tall-joe), who holds degrees in furniture design and wood science from Northeast Forestry University in China and a Ph.D. in furniture design and manufacturing from Purdue University in Indiana, is currently an M.F.A. candidate in sculpture/furniture design at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a curator for green furniture design at the Chipstone Foundation and Milwaukee Art Museum, and among his other experiences he was captain and CEO of an ice and snow sculpture team in China.

+

hongtao.zhou.com

Opposite:
The ice furniture set completed on Lake Mendota, near Memorial Union Terrace at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Right, top to bottom:
Responding to changes in the weather, the ice furniture melted back into the lake and the green life cycle was completed; the shoreline in spring and summer.









Wall Ornament and Crime

STORY BY
Mimi Luse

Dan Funderburgh shows that when it comes to wallpaper, the devil is in the details.



Dan Funderburgh's intricate wallpaper designs are hand-screened by Flavor Paper, based in New Orleans and Brooklyn. All the wallpaper rolls are 15 feet-long and 27 inches wide.

1 Elysian Fields.

2 Elysian Fields in Purple.

3 City Park in Dark Chocolate on Champagne.

4 Fruits of Design in Deep Three Blue.

5 Death from Above (aka Sharp Descent).

6 Dan Funderburgh installing wallpaper.

7 Chinatown Toile.

8 Fruits of Design in Sweet Potato.

In 1908 the modernist architect Adolf Loos wrote, "I have discovered the following truth and present it to the world: cultural evolution is equivalent to the removal of ornament from articles in daily use." In the essay "Ornament and Crime," Loos claimed that the use of ornament dates an object, detracting from its utility and adding waste to an already profligate world. A century later, enter Dan Funderburgh—caught red-handed. With a catalog that draws heavily on Renaissance styles, the Arts and Crafts movement and Islamic art, Funderburgh's wallpaper designs are an unabashed celebration of embellishment from nearly every era and civilization.

Confessing his affection for vintage patterns, Funderburgh says, "I would sleep with *The World of Ornament* (Taschen) next to me, if I could." But the real reward of studying history is that once you master the genre, you are free to subvert the subject. Among the studied boughs, wreaths and paisleys, Funderburgh slips dark humor into his wallpaper, giving traditionally innocuous ornament a biting wit that makes for an eloquent rebuttal to Loos's hypothesis. Combining traditional motifs with contemporary experience often inspired by city life, each work is a wry, self-contained narrative, charming from afar and fierce up close. Says Funderburgh, "I think the best pieces I've done are like a curated exhibition of my current thoughts and multiple historic aesthetic influences."

Many of Funderburgh's wallpapers are homages to William Morris's hyper-stylized plant patterns. But while Morris's designs were a nostalgic revisit to a preindustrial world, Funderburgh uses that template to acknowledge the impossibility of that return. In the ironically titled Elysian Fields, instead of a pastoral fantasy, Funderburgh regales us withVenus flytraps, fruit bats and stray bones.

In another instance, when installed in a room, the modified imperial damask of his City Park feels grand and imposing. So it's funny when the details reveal an intricate composition of rats, fire hydrants, pigeons and parking meters. By acknowledging the commonplace objects harbored in it, Funderburgh deconstructs an Olmsted and Vaux utopian landscape.

In all their postmodern duality, Funderburgh's wallpapers can transcend utilitarianism or decor, standing as discrete works of art on and off the walls. As such, the titles of his papers often weigh on their concept. Death from Above, which comes in several morbidly chirpy colorways, is a composition of broken bottles and other tools of destruction in free fall. As far as domestic decor goes, it's pretty dark. However Funderburgh is insistent that he is not a cynic. "I'm an optimist. It's one of the reasons I gravitate toward pretty things and historical references."

Funderburgh earned a B.F.A. from Kansas State University in illustration, but his time working as a commercial artist in Manhattan and Brooklyn has been the most formative experience. A collection of Persian artifacts at the Louvre initially piqued his interest in surface design. "I saw an anchor, a knife and a plate next to each other, each beautifully engraved. I thought, 'People spent a whole lot of time making each one,' and that attention to detail made me appreciate it.... Patterns delight me. I don't know why they have a bad rap."

All of Funderburgh's intricate designs are drafted with Adobe Illustrator. Not the most romantic medium, it's a computer skill that requires patience and years of experience to achieve technical mastery. When asked to define craft, he asserts, "I think of it in the most dictionary definition of the word: making things well." He expresses admiration for the crew at Flavor Paper, the New Orleans/Brooklyn-based boutique wallpaper facility that hand-screens his designs. "I have a good relationship with Flavor Paper, and when I submit designs, it feels like I'm making fine art. I haven't been asked to change things."

Funderburgh's wallpaper, treading the line between art, craft and design, is in the collections of Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum and the Miami Art Museum. He says his work is "a repudiation of the fabricated schism between art and decoration." Acknowledging designers past while cracking inside jokes about our contemporary surrounds, Funderburgh proves Loos wrong by showing that ornament is a clarification, not a problem.

Mimi Luse is a Brooklyn-based jeweler and writer who does film reviews for The L Magazine *and interviews artists for the blog BushwickBK.com.*

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danfunderburgh.com


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Dirt on Delight: Impulses That Form Clay



STORY BY
Robin Rice

Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania
January 15 – June 21, 2009
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
icaphila.org

Once you get past the title with its punning reference to clay, perhaps in its Freudian fecal sense, and to scandalous gossip, the most striking thing about "Dirt on Delight: Impulses that Form Clay" is the anti-hierarchical installation of the exhibition. The pattern of display, seemingly as arbitrary as a yard sale, transmits key ideas on an almost subliminal level. Aside from suggesting the characteristics of flux and growth through its branching, fragmented organization, it breezily refuses to tell visitors where or how to look or what to look for. "Dirt on Delight" ignores the wheezy old "sculpture-versus-function" debate that generally dominates the occasional penetration of materials-based art into venues like the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art. These overarching choices are not countered by the gallery handout and a brief wall text or by a few artists' taped responses to the question "How did you come to clay?" (accessible by cell phone and on the Internet). This novel (non)organization is disconcerting to some and liberating for others.

The design of "Dirt on Delight" eschews the expected modernist grid. More strikingly, it ignores walls as pedestrian guides and takes as its center an irregular branching form, a vague Y-shape composed of three long rectangular pedestal elements in the middle of the enormous gallery. Around this center there are many occasional islands, for example Ann Agee's brown table, *Agee Manufacturing Co. (Winter Catalogue)*, 2008, stocked with all-white porcelain bouquets of pinked-edged blossoms and dainty feminist figurine groupings related to Dresden shepherdesses.

Near Agee on the stained cement floor (reminiscent of a school ceramics studio) is a three-unit flotilla of large fluorescent pink vessels by Beverly Semmes. Between these two groups are freestanding works and Jessica Jackson Hutchins's *Convivium*, 2008, the title feast suggested by a domestic dining table draped with an embroidered cloth that bears a crazy-collaged papier-mâché structure supporting ceramic vessels.

The "Y" is home to numerous tabletop-scale works. In another of its angular bays, four of Betty Woodman's largish slab-sided *Winged Figures*, 2007, are poised on individual raw wood stands. A few pieces are unexpectedly aligned with the walls of the room. These include Robert Arneson's inordinately popular, more or less life-size, white-glazed *John Figure*, 1965, with a face in a toilet and a real footprint on the floor tiles. Arneson, a key figure in the development of 20th-century clay sculpture, has eight pieces in the show, mostly small busts—more than any of the other 21 artists.

Visitor circulation is necessarily inchoate and self-ordained, a situation which admits the real likelihood that some work will not be seen by some visitors. The subtitle of the show, "Impulses That Form Clay," is borne out through objects that consistently display a primal delight in the innate qualities of clay, impulses often contrary to the historic subjugation of clay—hand-built, wheel-thrown or cast—to the maker's will and skill.

The earliest works, all from around

All photos/Aaron Igler; Semmes/collection of Liz and Jay Fenderstock, courtesy of Galerie Bugdahn and Kaimer, Dusseldorf.

1900, are mediocre pieces by George Ohr, perhaps the first ceramist to value and preserve through firing those graceful, organically goofy curves and loops that just happen when you work with clay. Ohr's iconic vessels do not stand out among nearby pieces by artists of subsequent generations, but the grouping encourages consideration on a phenomenological level and suggests affinities that transcend time.

Several artists, like Arlene Shechet in *Good Ghost* and *LOLL*, both 2008, and, from an earlier generation, Viola Frey, in expressive pieces like *Man in the Moon*, ca. 1976, present works that are pinched, scrunched and squeezed: heavily manipulated and deliberately coarse. Not to neglect contrary impulses, other works are ultra precise (even obsessive): Ron Nagle shows small minimal shapes with painterly layered, overglazed surfaces; Ken Price's hefty elegantly twining but inescapably fecal *Zyko*, 2008, shares its perfectionism with Adrian Saxe's witty molded paste shrimp with a tiny gold crown, 1985.

The influence of the 18th century, a fruitful moment for clay, is underplayed but evident. Jane Irish's cast vases ornamented with contemporary vignettes were inspired by Spode. They were originally made to be parts of large installations. Jeffrey Mitchell's resonant multipart structures, like the blue and white *Some Aspects of Landscape*, 1993, have obvious chinoiserie roots.

There are infinite ways to understand and to approach any material, especially one, like clay, with an ancient cultural heritage. The virtue of "Dirt on Delight" lies in a range of possibilities that is not tied to date, style or theme. Art-making skills are learned and deliberately deployed but, like handwriting, manifest themselves as personal and unique. Undoubtedly, the action of individual predilections, abilities and the unconscious on the production of all art is a given. It is delightful to see it so well illustrated here.

The author and co-author of several books, Robin Rice is an adjunct associate professor at the University of the Arts, where she has taught craft history.

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The exhibition is at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 11 – November 29, 2009. The softcover catalog is $35, icaphila.org and shop.walkerart.org.

Opposite top:
Installation view of "Dirt on Delight."

Opposite bottom:
Beverly Semmes
Shinnecock Pot #9, 2002, clay and paint {h. 20 in, w. 15 in, d. 14 in}.



Right top:
Jane Irish
Vase, Vito Acconci, 1995, low-fire whiteware, luster, china paint {h. 12 in, w. 11 in, d. 11 in}.





Right:
Robert Arneson
Maquette for Chemo I, 1978, glazed porcelain {h. 12 in, w. 3 in, d. 3 in}.

Far right:
Adrian Saxe
Untitled Theiere (Crevette), 1985, pate tender {h. 12¾ in, w. 8¼ in}.

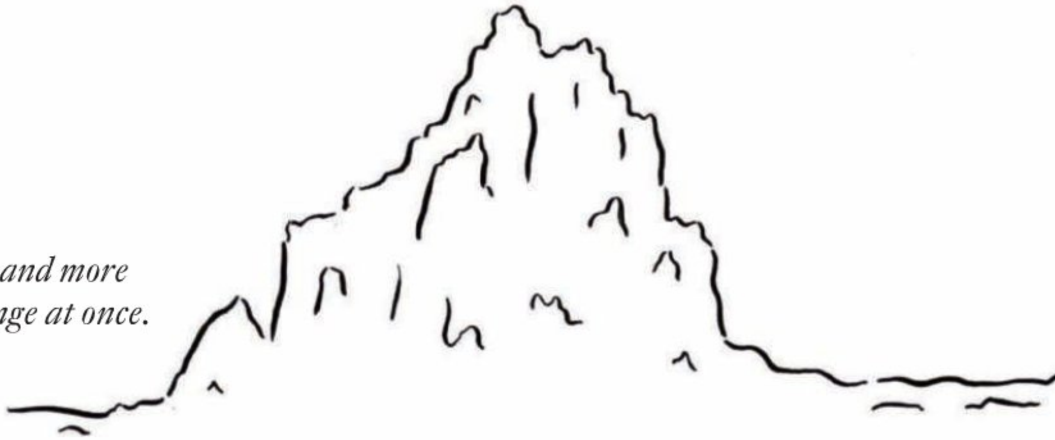
Below:
Betty Woodman
Two-Part Italian Vase, ca. 1983, glazed earthenware {h. 14 in, w. 29½ in, d. 5 in}.

The subtitle of the show is borne out through objects that consistently display a primal delight in the innate qualities of clay.



Irish/collection of Elizabeth E. Yohlin, Arneson/ courtesy of George Adams Gallery and Brian Gross Fine Art, Saxe/courtesy of Frank Lloyd Gallery, Woodman/courtesy of Max Protech Gallery.

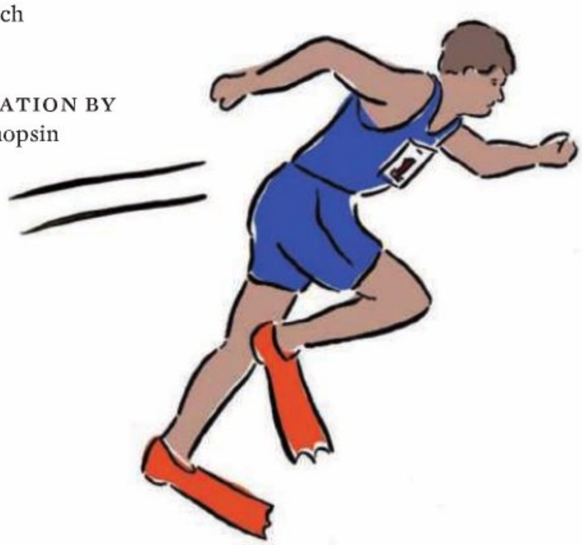
I find that the things I value more and more are those that comfort and challenge at once.



IN DEFENSE OF THE COMFORT ZONE

ESSAY BY
Akiko Busch

ILLUSTRATION BY
Tamara Shopsin



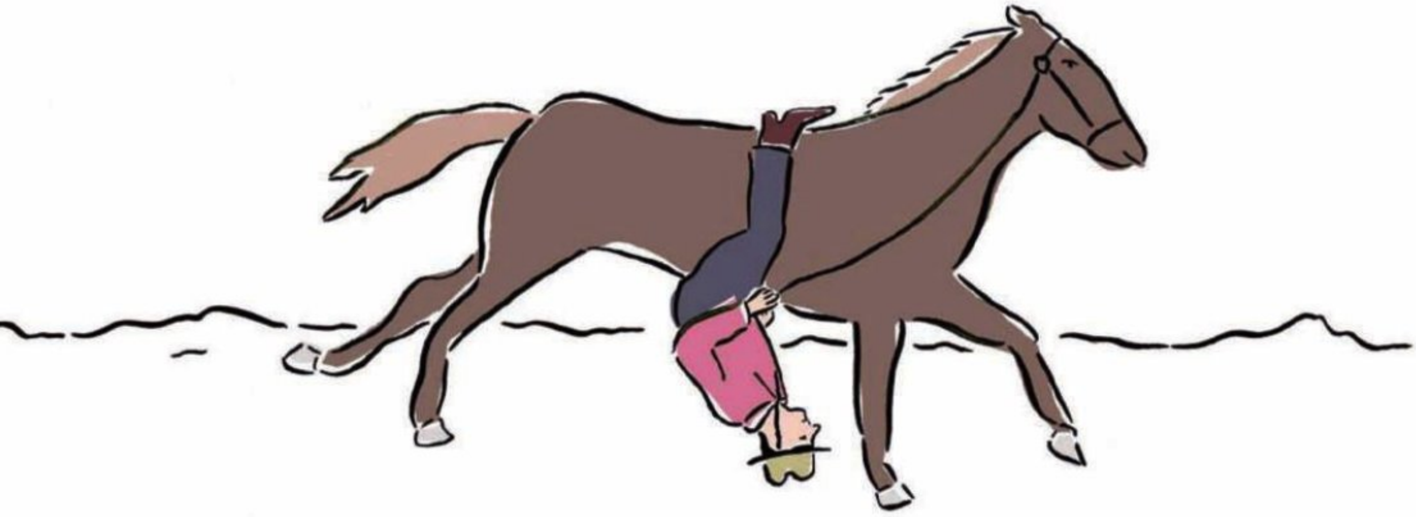
For reasons that remain a mystery to me, comfort seems to have gotten a bad name recently. Whether it's a yoga stretch or an artistic enterprise, we are urged continually to get out of our comfort zone; getting "too comfortable" with an idea, a material, a relationship, a mode of work resonates with staleness, inertia, creative fatigue. All of which seems curious. I don't know about you, but the comfort zone is pretty much exactly where I want to be.

Because as I see it, comfort has something to do with physical expectancy in the material world. When you reach for a doorknob or light switch, when the handle of a mug fits your hand just so, when the seat and back of a chair conform to your body, that is to say, the hundreds, maybe thousands, of times each day when you expect to find something where it is and then do—that's what gives you your bearings.

Finding things where we expect them to be offers no small comfort; it gives us an abiding sense of reassurance, possibly because it implies a sense of fit with our surroundings. The message is that it may be possible to find a sense of reciprocity, some sense of mutual accommodation, with the external world. It gives us a sense of belonging and confirms the fact that we have arrived at an agreement with the material world. It's hard to dispute such an agreement. Consider Flaubert's proposal that one "be regular and ordinary in your life, like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work"—as good an argument for predictability as you're ever likely to find.

I think of this every time I sit down to dinner at the cherry table made by my husband, cabinetmaker Brian Johnston. Its surface is at just the right level, 29 inches from the floor. Six and a half feet long, thirty-two inches wide, it seats six comfortably, eight intimately. The rich grains of its surface have been polished and waxed, but its shine comes from years of use as well. In all of this, it does what a dinner table must do; it constructs a place of civility. In his "Ode to the Table" Pablo Neruda serenades the trustworthiness of the "titanic quadrupeds, they sustain our hopes and our daily life." Ours is just such a table.

But an occlusion on one of the legs signals some violent rupture in the tree's growth, a blemish caused by an insect, possibly, or the



consequence of a crack in the center of the tree, some interruption of life. And the trick, it seems to me, lies in such contradictions. If we acknowledge the way we rely on comfort, the funny thing is how easily we then find it aligns itself with provocation. There is something sustaining in the way the table accommodates its error.

I wear a white sapphire ring made by the jeweler Gabriella Kiss. It is a little oval of brightness that sits precisely in its gold bezel, which is securely attached to its shank that itself fits comfortably on my finger. Yet the stone is marked by a slight fissure, a tear in its brilliant clarity, some lingering trace of the geological havoc that produced it.

This congruence of accommodation and provocation, it seems to me, is what we look for in the things we live with. Surely it provides a livelier and more relevant interaction than that of the exhausted round-robin concerning the relative value of functional and conceptual objects. And I find that the things I value more and more are those that comfort and challenge at once; in doing so, they seem to allow for a deeper sense of engagement with the human imagination. They recognize some necessary coincidence of fit and irritation; they acknowledge that these qualities are not mutually exclusive, and how, at the best of times, they can even inform and sustain one another.

Icons of modern art and design spell this out explicitly: Think of how the sinuous spirals of Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum offer both the promise of a womblike containment and a kind of vertigo. Or how the knife-sharp pleats of Issey Miyake's textiles manage to convey constriction and flow at once. Or how the seeming disconnect between the conventional bowl form and urbanist Deco graphics of Viktor Schreckengost's *Jazz Bowl* actually works out just fine.

The familiar and the strange can inform one another; they recognize one another. They have a better relationship than we think. They are natural cohabitants. You might even say they are comfortable with each other. ✚

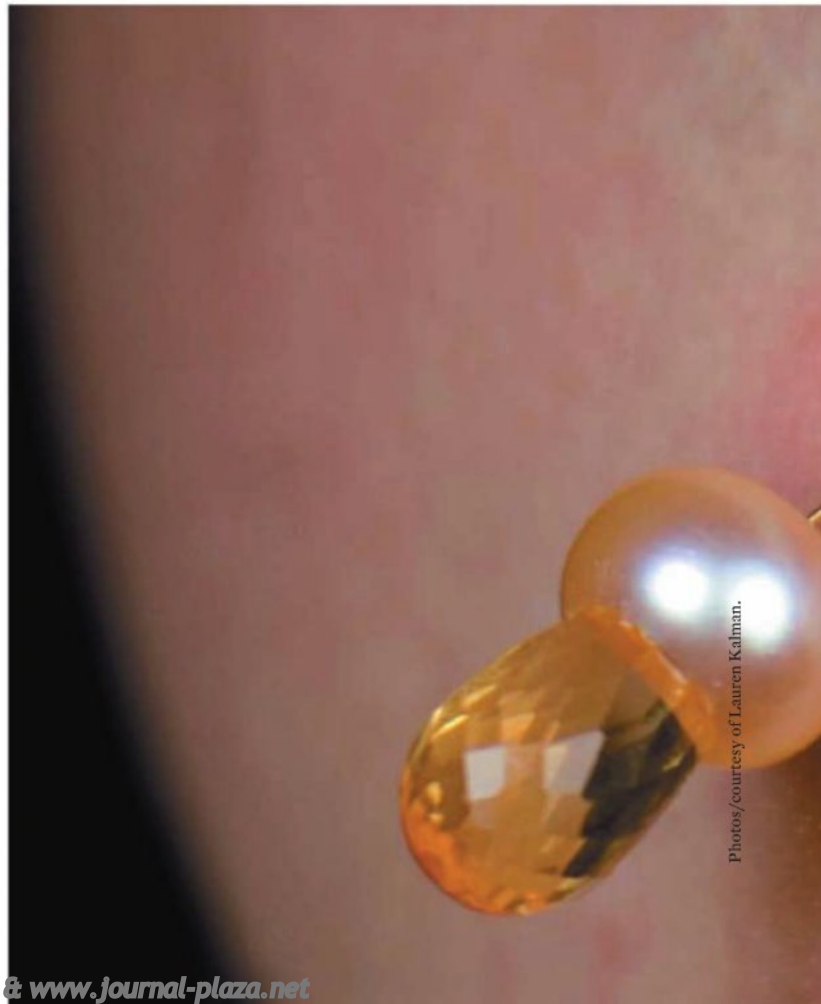
Akiko Busch is an essayist whose work has appeared in numerous national publications. She is the author of Nine Ways to Cross a River *and* The Uncommon Life of Common Objects.



STORY BY
Gabriel Craig

The Transgressions of Lauren Kalman

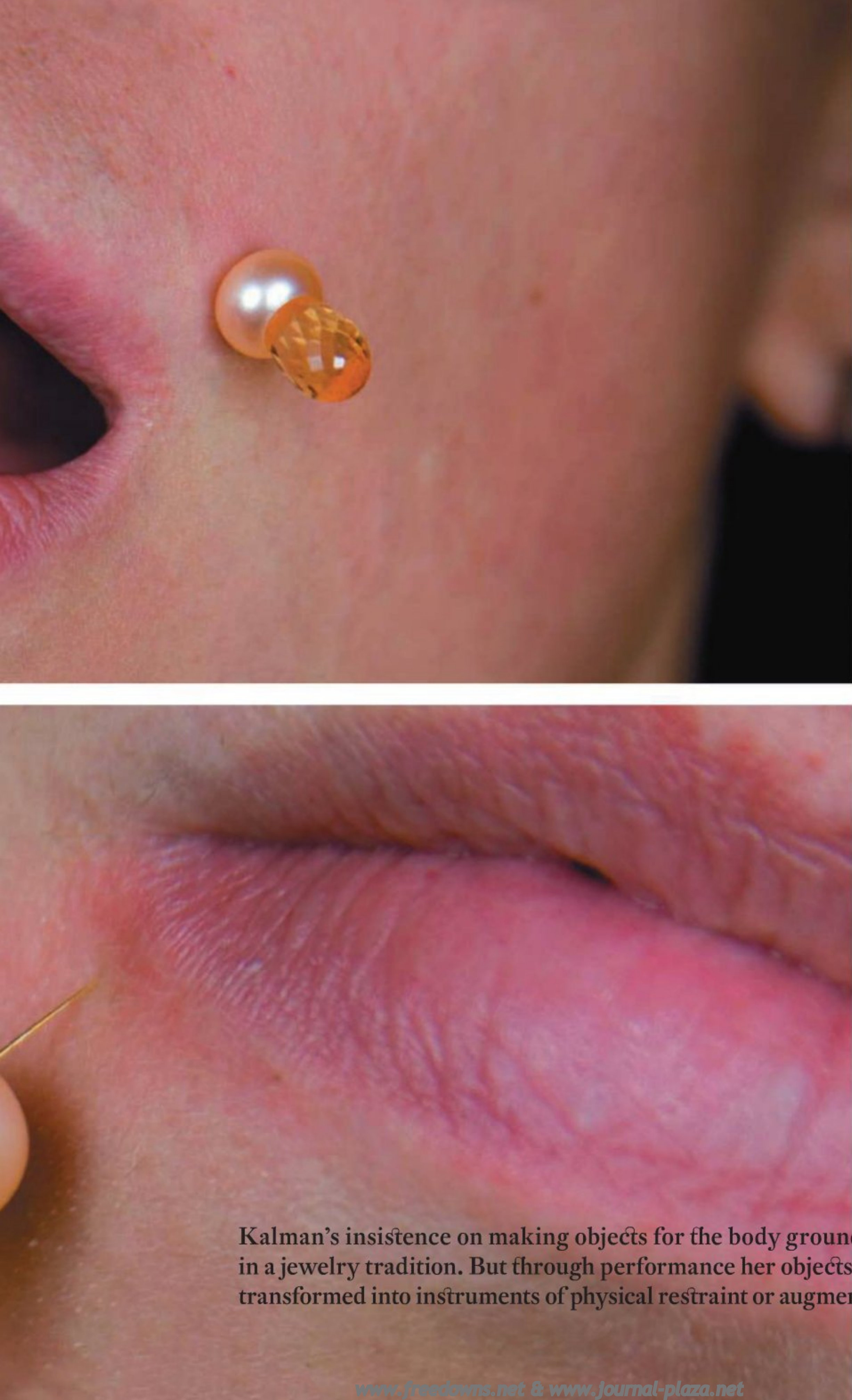




Photos/courtesy of Lauren Kalman.

Unless you have allergies or sensitive skin, it's likely that rashes, blemishes and other dermatological conditions are not the first thing (or even the tenth) that you associate with jewelry. However, for Lauren Kalman, blemishes, body image and the grotesque are fertile territory for exploring our obsession with the body and how it is portrayed in vernacular images. Kalman creates meaning using the body as her primary medium and locating it in relation to our image-saturated culture.

Working from her Providence, Rhode Island, studio, Kalman employs what can be described as a thematic approach to jewelry materials and techniques; the objects she produces are used as props in performance activities, which are documented in photographs and videos. Her insistence on making objects for›



Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments, Wart, 2009, paired images, inkjet print {h. 26 in, w. 26 in}.

The Tra of Lau Kal

Kalman's insistence on making objects for the body grounds her in a jewelry tradition. But through performance her objects are transformed into instruments of physical restraint or augmentation.

the body grounds Kalman (who earned a B.F.A. in jewelry and metalsmithing from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design) in a jewelry tradition. But through performance, her objects are transformed into instruments of either physical restraint or augmentation.

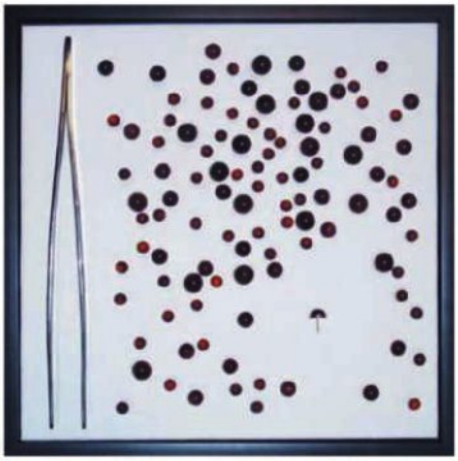
The physicality and seeming absurdity of Kalman's activities conjure the familiar unease of canonized performance art (think of Carolee Schneemann, Karen Finley or Paul McCarthy), but she leaves us wanting, as she gives only a close-cropped and artfully composed frame filled with pink skin and gold implements. The video or photograph is considered as a formal object itself, underlining her dedication to craftsmanship—yes, photographs and videos are crafted, too. Kalman's work exudes an uncanny yet reasonable hybridity. She is the child of Art and Craft's divorce; quite indifferent to their past quarrels, she loves them both. After all, they are her parents.

Kalman's path is an interesting one. She grew up in industrial Cleveland, Ohio, where her mother was a commercial photographer and her father an industrial designer. Kalman's parents are no doubt present in her work, as her objects for the body allude to ergonomics and industrial design, while the use of photography is a straightforward lineage. In her graduate studies at Ohio State University her focus was art and technology, two fields that she seemed almost predestined to embrace. Kalman's interdisciplinary approach has also contributed to her career as an educator. Her ability to bring disparate influences to her classroom no doubt serves the students at the Rhode Island School of Design, where she teaches in the sculpture department.

If the range and depth of Kalman's objects, photographs, videos and installations are not enough to impress, her prodigious output cements the matter. Kalman tends to work on one project at a time, chugging along with a new body of work annually. Following her progress over the past five years, one can see how she fluidly builds each subsequent project on the last. For instance, a conceptual exploration of alternative medicine (as in her *Aesthetic Acupuncture* experiments, which consisted of acupuncture needles set with gemstones) may yield a functional mechanism in the next body of work. This is the case with her most recent body of work, *Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments,* 2008–9. Kalman uses golden acupuncture needles, set with precious stones and pearls in the pin heads, to pierce the skin in arrangements that simulate dermatological conditions such as acne, warts, nevus comedonicus (a rare skin abnormality characterized by small but pronounced closely set pustules), shingles and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases including syphilis and gonorrhea.

The precious pins transform the afflictions into aesthetically pleasing adornment for the body. While maintaining an element of repulsion in their impingement on the skin and referencing the marginally accepted practice of body piercing, the *Blooms* are also striking in their color, arrangement and monetary value. Thus they are both desirable and disgusting. The appearance of the groupings derives from Internet sources, reflecting her interest in vernacular images. After the pins are arranged on the body they are photographed, and the photograph—rather than the precious pins—becomes the work. The ease with which we recognize disease in the photographs is facilitated by our willingness to accept the photographic medium as an accurate representation of reality. In *Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments,* restorative›









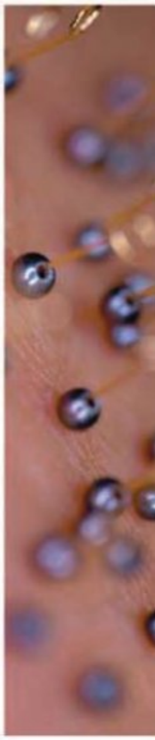
Top:
Cystic Acne, Chest, 2009, gold-plated silver, semipermanent acupuncture needles, semiprecious stones, mdf, faux leather, brass, hammer, box.

Bottom:
Syphilis, 2009, gold-plated silver, acupuncture needles, carnelian, mdf, faux leather, brass, pliers, box.

By beginning with actual bodily experience and moving back to the self-image, Kalman places the primary importance on the body, thereby challenging how we relate to our bodies in an image-dominated culture.













Blooms, Efflorescence, and Other Dermatological Embellishments

Above:
Cystic Acne, Back, 2009, paired images, inkjet print {h. 26 in, w. 26 in}.

Top:
Nevus Comedonicus, 2009, paired images, inkjet print {h. 26 in, w. 26 in}.

Bottom:
Syphilis, 2009, paired images, inkjet print {h. 26 in, w. 26 in}.









Hard Wear

Top:
Oral Rims, 2006,
gold-plated electro-formed copper, plaster, stainless steel table {h. 4 in, w. 4 in; table h. 40 in, w. 10 in, d. 10 in}.

Above:
Lip Adornment, 2006,
laminated digital image, gold-plated electro-formed copper, semiprecious stones {h. 30 in, w. 40 in}.

Opposite:
Oral Rims, 2006,
digital print, laminated on acrylic {h. 30 in, w. 23 in}.

Lip Adornment/collection of Ohio State University.



It is Kalman's misuse of body, material and craft processes that so unsettles the viewer.









Hard Wear

Top:
Canal Caps, 2006,
gold-plated electro-
formed copper, stainless
steel table {h. 1 in, w. 1
in, d. 1 in; table h. 40 in,
w. 10 in, d. 10 in}.

Bottom left:
Nostril Jewel, 2006,
digital print,
laminated on acrylic,
gold-plated electro-
formed copper,
semiprecious stones
{h. 30 in, w. 23 in}.

Bottom middle:
Gold Duct, 2006,
digital print,
laminated on acrylic,
gold-plated electro-
formed copper
{h. 28 in, w. 23 in}.

Bottom right:
Pearls, 2006,
digital print,
laminated on acrylic
{h. 32 in, w. 23 in}.

meets destructive, beautiful meets grotesque, and the visceral body is mediated by mechanical reproduction.

Admittedly, Kalman mines these paradoxes. "In today's image-saturated culture, we think of our bodies in terms of [abstracted] self-image, rather than actual bodily experience," she said during her residency at the Santa Fe Art Institute this year. Beginning with *Hard Wear,* 2006, Kalman translated her cathartic performances into still and moving images. By beginning with actual bodily experience and moving back to the self-image, Kalman places the primary importance on the body, thereby challenging how we relate to our bodies in an image-dominated culture. In her practice, craft indeed seems to be the elephant in the room as she oscillates between recorded body transgressions and installation environments. While *Blooms* reaches an audience as medium-size color inkjet prints, *Hard Wear* is a multimedia installation that includes objects, photographs and dismembered LCD video screens. In *Hard Wear* and other installations, such as *Dress Up Dress Down,* 2007, and *Corpus, Figure, Skate,* 2008, Kalman defines her spaces by quiet and sterile presentations that recall scientific and medical display strategies, like those of Philadelphia's Mütter Museum (though perhaps less cluttered). In *Hard Wear* she relies on metalsmithing skills and materials to generate bodily work, though you will find no pendants or brooches here. Electroforming, gold plating, gold leafing, pearls and gemstones are all used in an infantile exploration of the sensory receptors (i.e., the mouth, nose, ears and hands). The naïveté with which she inserts these materials into or liberates them from her orifices–thereby mocking the orifices' socially accepted use–renders them ludicrous in terms of function.

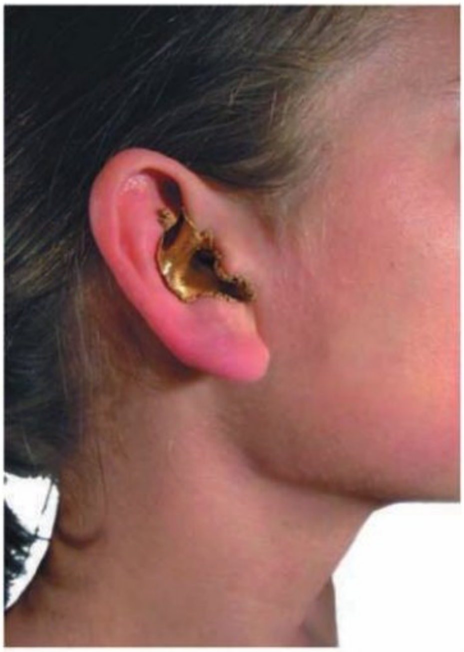
In fact it is this misuse of body, material and craft processes that so unsettles the viewer. As the transgressions of the *Hard Wear* installation require the presence of the body for their potency, Kalman's presentation employs indexical media–photographs and video–to keep the body present after the activity has ended. While the props and remnants she creates are usually present in the gallery, Kalman denies any attachment to the discrete or decontextualized object. Her closely cropped photographs and videos of the object's use on the body direct our understanding of the physical objects presented. This control over how we perceive her ambiguous props clashes with the traditional jewelry object's absence of context without the body or in the gallery space. In true paradoxical fashion, the object and the individual are martyred as the viewer is confronted by a sexualized orifice, performing lewd acts.

"I think of my work as transgressions of the body," Kalman confides. And perhaps transgression is the operative word in more ways than one. Kalman freely and unabashedly moves in and out of craft: she rejects it yet holds it sacred, even showing often at Sienna Gallery, a noted jewelry gallery in Lenox, Massachusetts. Her objects owe much to technical training, though without the context of the body they would cease to be interesting. It is through her transgressions that Kalman transforms the body into a site for crafted objects, image making and sociological inquiry.

Gabriel Craig is a metalsmith, writer and craft activist currently living in Houston, Texas.

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laurenkalman.com
siennagallery.com







Top:
Canal Caps, 2006, digital print, laminated on acrylic, gold-plated electroformed copper {h. 30 in, w. 23 in}.

Bottom:
A 10-minute video installation in which Kalman demonstrates her process, 2006.

INTERVIEW BY
Suzanne Ramljak

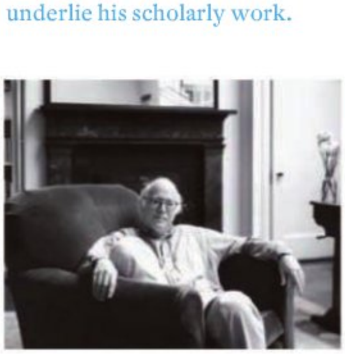
ILLUSTRATION BY
Amze Emmons

Richard Sennett on Making

The eminent sociologist asserts that the slow tempo of craftwork, of taking the time you need to do something well, is profoundly stabilizing to individuals.

Richard Sennett, whose book *The Craftsman* garnered a great deal of attention on its publication last year, will be the keynote speaker at the American Craft Council's October conference in Minneapolis. Sennett is a sociologist and social analyst who teaches at New York University and the London School of Economics. After an injury put an end to his hopes of a musical career, he studied at the University of Chicago and Harvard, earning a Ph.D. in 1969. In the 70s he founded, with Susan Sontag and Joseph Brodsky, the New York Institute for the Humanities at NYU. In the 80s he served as president of the American Council on Work, and in the 90s he began to address the question of how changes in capitalism are affecting workers.

He spoke by telephone with Suzanne Ramljak about some of the issues that underlie his scholarly work.



Photo/Thomas Struth.

Suzanne Ramljak: *Your most recent book,* The Craftsman, *is the first in a trilogy devoted to what you call "techniques for conducting a particular way of life." Can you elaborate on the larger project behind these three volumes?*

Richard Sennett: This is a project about material culture in the broadest sense. *The Craftsman* was about making things well; the second volume, *The Workshop*, focuses on developing social skills and cooperation; and the third, *The Foreigner*, will be about environmental design and crafting cities. The question that ties them all together is, how do we develop skills in the course of making things, whether they are physical objects, social relations or environments? Underlying this study is a theory that I call "situated cognition," which is the way human beings develop their capacities through craftwork. This is at the heart of the entire exploration.

SR *One of the key issues you've identified is "how paying attention is organized." Does this concern tie in with situated cognition?*

RS Attention is something that gets organized by others, as well as by ourselves. When we focus on making a physical object, or on playing a musical instrument, our concentration level is mainly self-directed. In a social context, focusing on the concrete and particular is shaped by our interactions with other people. They situate us. That is why cooperation and collaboration are so important. Our social relations can help us pay attention to what we are doing without arousing anxiety or defensiveness, or they can interfere with our ability to attend to the concrete world. That is what this whole idea of situated cognition is all about.

SR *Your own definition of craftsmanship is the "desire to do a job well for its own sake." You posit this desire as a basic human impulse to do good work. So your theory rests on the assumption of an innate human drive?*›



RS The premise is very simple. Human beings are form makers, and as such seek a sense of closure, or what others would call wholeness. Craftwork, in developmental terms, enacts that impulse with physical objects, satisfying a psychological desire for closure and tangible results. There is no real full human development without this process. That is partly what I mean when I say "there is a craftsman in everyone." I don't think the quest for good work only applies to [the maker of] a Stradivarius. I think it is a capacity that exists in most human beings.

For a long time we have known that this is how people develop language and cognitive powers, but we haven't appreciated that this same developmental path occurs in our dealings with the physical environment. The lack of research on the mental activity involved in making physical things has important social repercussions. People who are competent in verbal symbols are thought to be more gifted than those whose development occurs through physical or manual experience. There is a terrible blindness in modern society to people who work with their hands, and this leads to class differentiation and even contempt for manual work.

SR *You tie craftsmanship to a number of other behaviors, principles and values including commitment, pride, discipline and upholding objective standards. Pride seems to be an especially potent reward of craftwork.*

RS I don't use the term pride in the sense of trumpeting oneself. It is more a sense of self-respect. We usually get incomplete rewards from other people, particularly if one is low in the social pecking order. So we have to look for other available sources of self-worth. Enacting this process of completion, of making something that is separate from us and stands on its own like an object, is a way of saying, "I made this. I exist."

SR *We could twist Descartes' well-known phrase from "I think therefore I am" to "I make therefore I am."*

RS Absolutely. And there is a great emotional reward in such physical production. It gives you a sense of place in the world and that it matters that you're here.

SR *Another reward of the craft experience that you identify is the anchoring in tangible reality. Today, more than ever, we need such tangible anchors.*

RS Our modern economy privileges pure profit, momentary transactions and rapid fluidity. Part of craft's anchoring role is that it helps to objectify experience and also to slow down labor. It is not about quick transactions or easy victories. That slow tempo of craftwork, of taking the time you need to do something well, is profoundly stabilizing to individuals. When people are forced to do things quickly it becomes a type of triage. In the process of working very fast, we don't have the time for reflection and being self-critical. We tend to go into autopilot and mistakes increase. This is founded on a basic principle of cognition, which is the inverse relationship between speed and quality. Self-critical faculties decrease with speed, and the brain does a better job of processing when it goes slowly than rapidly. The way the capitalist economy is designed sacrifices the logic of craft, which results in poorly made objects and a degraded physical environment. This capitalist model of productivity then feeds back into the schools, so the very training of people becomes industrialized. The craft model of education–slow, concentrated, repetitive–is seen as something dysfunctional and irrelevant in the modern world.

SR *This trickle-down effect into education is crucial and connects to the question of organizing attention and the ability to focus.*

RS That is a very important issue. Pedagogically, we teach people that the moment they learn to do something, they can move on to something else rather than continue to dwell on that lesson. When musicians practice something over and over again, they get deeper into the music, expanding it from within, exploring problems, and so forth. Our pedagogy doesn't tend to that. We go by the notion that once you've solved something, the actual experience of doing it is secondary. And that whittles down attention. This is a terrible problem in the teaching of music in schools, where the length of time that children can practice becomes reduced. We disable the actual experience of repetition, and that eventually cuts down on our capacity to concentrate.

In the beginning, when someone is learning a manual skill like playing the piano, teachers try hard to entice students because they think they'll get bored. But after a while students come to concentrate on the process of learning through doing a thing again and again. They become interested in the actual skill development. The real pedagogical challenge is getting people to that point where they'll do it without having the carrot of outside motivation.

The way the capitalist economy is designed sacrifices the logic of craft, which results in poorly made objects and a degraded physical environment.

SR *I found it interesting that* The Craftsman *ends on a down note, with your suggesting that a craftsman's life is often marked by "bitterness and regret." Is that because our culture has scant regard for craft values and practice?*

RS Hopefully, people who do good work and take pride in the thing itself can sustain hardships, even though they aren't given much social or economic recognition. Some can, and others still want that external reward. We tend to think that self-respect within our work is a garnish on top of economic reward. Although that notion doesn't agree with much social science, it is ingrained within American culture, which holds that first and foremost people believe the most important thing about work is making as much money as possible.

SR *Which is capitalism. And this leads to the clash between a craftsperson's values and capitalist values. In your book* The Culture of the New Capitalism *(2005) you claim that*

craftsmanship represents the most radical challenge to the new capitalism. So is capitalism's strongest opponent craft?

RS Nobody believes in revolution anymore, and nobody wants to go back to the guilds. So this is not a brief for returning to the old-fashioned guild system. However, I think the most radical thing that could happen in the modern workplace is for workers to say, "Let us do a better job. This is not good enough, we could do better." This would be profoundly destabilizing to the way most work is organized. So, in that sense, it is a very powerful proposal. We are beginning to see this in companies that are committed to employee enrichment and developing the craft powers of their employees, like Toyota and BMW. This is a real challenge for the future–how can we produce a nation of craftsmen?

In some ways we're beginning to see an increase of the craft ethos throughout culture. We are in an age that is inventing new crafts all the time. A lot of craftspeople I meet are focused on the traditional craft media and don't realize how what they do is related to advances in technology, medicine and politics. The principles of making physical objects and the skill sets involved have expanded to all sorts of other domains. I'd like to see people in the craft world get rid of their neurosis about justifying whether they're artists or not. Instead, they should be looking at their practice as something that is really important. So it doesn't matter whether Damien Hirst thinks they are artists or not. What matters is that the surgeon or the computer programmer sees that they are all engaged in the same kind of activity.

SR *You've offered a complex diagnosis of our culture, but I'm curious about your prescriptions. If you could pass legislation that would help make people more engaged and competent citizens, what would it be?*

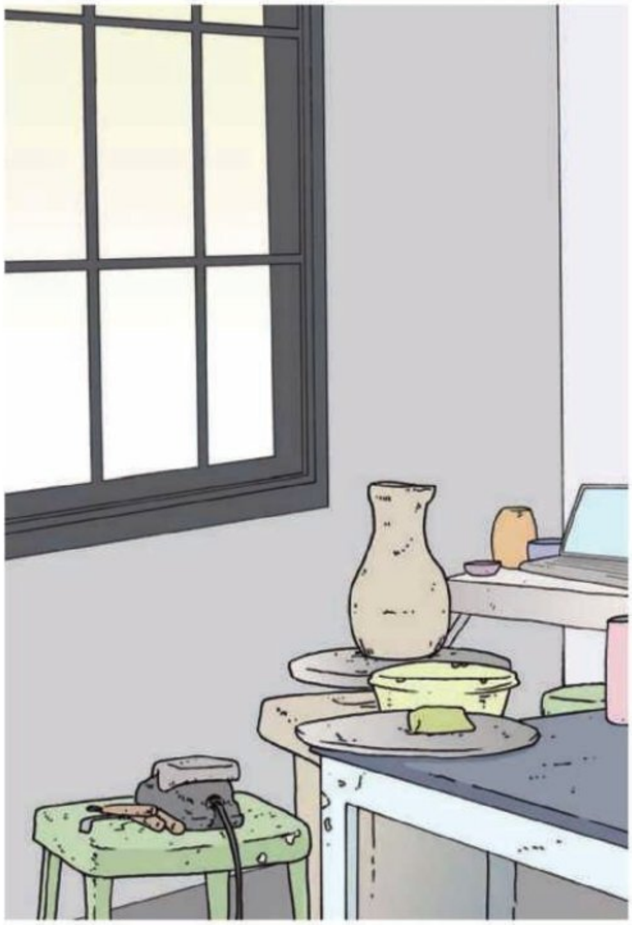
RS I'd ban all multiple-choice questions in tests, which encourage people to get the quickest answer possible rather than to dwell on the problem. This may sound frivolous, but it is quite serious. On a more practical matter, I think that craftsmanship flourishes in small-scale business and I'd like to see our government, like the British government, invest more in small-production businesses. That's an absolute necessity. To support craftsmanship you have to support enterprise on the small-scale level.

Also, in the United States we don't put enough money into mentoring and have very poor mentor programs. We don't pay master craftsmen to take on and train young craftsmen. We don't see that as a social good. This is the single policy we could do in the U.S. to get people engaged in the transfer of physical knowledge from master to apprentice. So they can learn skills directly from those actually practicing their craft. I would really like to see this happen.

SR *When you speak about building a nation of craftspeople, do you have an ideal cultural model or movement in mind, either historical or contemporary?*

RS There are lots of small examples, but nothing that represents a huge alternative. In the beginning of *The Craftsman* I describe the community of Linux programmers and their chat rooms, which involve highly focused work on a concrete project. It is very interactive and very cooperative. Another small example in the U.K. is the organic farm movement, which is also quite cooperative, and where people are always discussing the skills of actually growing food. Now that isn't going to shake the powers of the supermarket, but it is a strong movement. So there are lots of small initiatives like this. And in traditional crafts the same sort of thing is going on, with the return of people doing skilled physical work like weaving, knitting and sewing, for example. Parts of those economic sectors are coming back to life and they are much more collaborative. The idea of this is twofold: one is small-scale and face-to-face, and the other is web-based. I think the web is a fantastic medium for craftsmen. It is a means for mutual support, skill sharing and problem solving. There is something inherently workshop-like that dwells on the web; it is a great technology for craft. ✚

Suzanne Ramljak, a writer, curator and art historian, is currently editor of Metalsmith *magazine.*



Richard Sennett's major publications in sociology and cultural studies include:
- *The Craftsman*, 2008
- *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, 2005
- *Respect, In an Age of Inequality*, 2003
- *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, 1998
- *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, 1994
- *The Fall of Public Man*, 1977

He is also the author of three novels.

The tensions within craft have to do with allegiances and historical conditions established by different political generations.

DIY: Revolution 3.0–Beta

ESSAY BY
Dennis Stevens





FIGURE 1
Knitta, a Houston-based crew of knitters, wrapped a bus in Mexico City in November 2008 with knitted and crocheted blankets. The interior is hollowed out and used for community art workshops.

FIGURE 2
Lisa Anne Auerbach's banner (shawl) *Quagmire*, 2005, is typical of her machine-knitted garments that carry political commentary.

Craft in the 21st century is a nebulous and slippery topic. As the confluence of several different generational interpretations of a single term, "craft" presents us with a series of distinct yet connected sets of knowledge and values. Although each meaning refers to the production of objects by hand, a common definition for craft remains elusive.

Today studio craft is recognized as valuing skill, connoisseurship and tradition, and its social structure seems to generate the need for educational and professional hierarchies. In contrast, DIY craft emerges from a culture that does not seek professional validation within traditional art methodology but rather is motivated by joining with others socially in shared, creative activity [FIGURE 1]. Further, DIY often relies upon an ironic or satirical approach to forms of domestic creativity that the feminists of the 1970s (otherwise termed second-wave feminists) strictly sought to reject [FIGURE 2].

These differences, combined with the fact that DIY craft places little value upon hierarchical structure and tradition, often set the two forms of craft at odds with one another. In recognition of this tension, I aim here to place the DIY craft movement within the larger cultural context of generational movements, as these craft practitioners comprise groups whose values and aims need to be acknowledged and understood.

Let me first make clear that I am not making a simple series of generalizations about generations, social movements and the experience of groups of people. Rather, I am applying the concept of "political generations" to the concept of craft. According to feminist scholar Nancy Whittier,[1] a political generation is "a group of people (not necessarily

1. Nancy Whittier, "Turning it Over: Personal Change in the Columbus, Ohio Women's Movement," 1984, in *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement,* ed. Myra Marx and Patricia Yancey Martin, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995, p. 180.

of the same age) that experiences shared formative social conditions at approximately the same point in their lives, and holds a common interpretive framework shaped by historical circumstances." Thus, the tensions within craft have to do with allegiances and historical conditions established by different political generations that stand in contrast to one another.

However, the entire concept of political generations is surely more complicated than drawing a few lines in the sand, and several authors have suggested that rather than being cohesive, third-wave feminism, a movement that seeks to challenge what it considers to be the failures and shortcomings of second-wave feminism, is united by the themes of multiple voices[2] and contradiction.[3] We could likely say the same thing about Generation X,[4] and thus DIY craft, altogether.

If there is anything cohesive about the DIY movement, it's that its practitioners choose to reinvent tradition as a remix, engaging with it through parody, satire and nostalgic irony, quite in the same way that Sid Vicious mocks and riffs upon high culture in the opening minute of the Sex Pistols' 1977 remake of Paul Anka's "My Way." It is important to acknowledge that DIY craft as a movement emerged as part of community activism, with a lineage that can be traced back to the 1980s and the punk movement, 'zine activity and into the early 1990s with the Riot Grrrl movement [FIGURE 3]. In its essence, this new type of craft represents a form of expression that often flies in the face of the 1970s second-wave feminist rejection of creativity in the domestic sphere.

Today within craft it seems that we are confronted with a shifting epoch, evidenced by the struggle of young people to be understood and to live out their own generational experiences and "truths" in a distinct manner. As conceptual artist and writer David Robbins suggests, "Every generation of artist configures culture to match its own experience. The conditions of our upbringing imprint us and when we come to maturity we return the favor, imprinting our sensibilities upon the culture and bending it to our wills."[5] Such a comment supports the assertion that today, as always, craft consists of multiple groups with their own goals, ambitions and internal methods of knowledge production and sharing; all are navigating their own way through previously unmapped territories [FIGURE 4].

During their youth, the baby boom generation, like the second-wave feminists, believed that revolutionary change was necessary to shift the existing social structure toward a more liberal moral ideal. During their formative stages as adolescents and young adults, they experienced much political turmoil–the Vietnam War, the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the struggles of the civil rights and women's liberation movements. Young adults in the mid-1960s were portrayed by the French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard in his *Masculin Féminin* (1966) as "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola." [FIGURE 5]

Young adults in the mid-1980s, however, are described by Robbins as the children of the French philosopher Roland Barthes and Coca-Cola, and he further describes his shared generational experience as having "no use for 60s naïveté or 70s embitterment"[6] because they led to cynicism. Nevertheless, the cynicism returned in full bloom along with new attitudes toward the media and political change. In contrast to the baby boomers, adolescents and young adults of the 90s experienced punk rock, grunge, hip-hop and mass consumerism. As a result of these experiences›

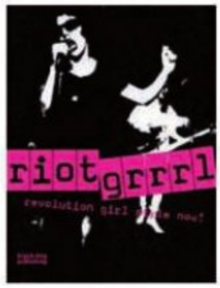






FIGURE 3
Cover of *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Style Now!*, a documentary history of the punk feminist movement.

FIGURE 4
Liz Collins's *Knitting Nation Phase 4: Pride*, part of an ongoing collaborative performance and installation project.

FIGURE 5
Poster for Jean-Luc Godard's *Masculin Féminin* (1966).

2. L. S. Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography and the Future of Feminism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

3. C. Bailey, "Making Waves and Drawing Lines: The Politics of Defining the Vicissitudes of Feminism," *Hypatia* 12, 1997, pp. 17–28.

4. Generation X includes those born early-to-mid-1960s to late 70s.

5. David Robbins, *The Velvet Grind: Selected Essays, Interviews and Satires (1983–2005)*, ed. L. Bovier and F. Stroun, JRP/Ringier and Les Presses du Réel, 2006, p. 108.

6. Ibid.



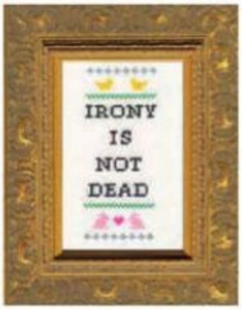






FIGURE 6
The Nike Blanket Petition, an anti-sweatshop protest initiated by Cat Mazza in 2003.

FIGURE 7
Julie Jackson's cross-stitched "sampler," a tongue-in-cheek take on traditional needlecraft.

FIGURE 8
Marianne Joergensen wrapped a tank in a knitted cozy in 2006 to protest the Iraq War.

FIGURE 9
Hummer Cozy, 2004, one of Adam Ellyson's works enclosing an industrial object with quilted fabric .

as well as the history that they inherited from their parents' generation, the Gen Xers and third-wave feminists confronted the inherent difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of changing the world through direct political action; hence the cynicism. Today these groups' efforts to bring about political change often remain subversively masked within their culturally fluent use of mockery. Growing up with MTV and the Internet gives them media literacy, and, as a consequence, the methods they use to engage with the culture are very different from those of their parents.

Whether or not any of them ever studied Barthes, Gen Xers and third-wave feminists alike have a strong sense of semiotics (the theory of signs and symbols in language) [FIGURE 6], and they like to use the tools of the remix–the aforementioned satire, parody and irony–along with an occasional tinge of cynicism or nihilism drawn, respectively, from grunge and punk influences, to make cultural statements [FIGURE 7]. In fact, quite often their experience with culture is such that their creative work calls our attention to the chasm between a diverse range of experiences and "truths" that are at the root of the postmodern condition, and quite often the remix calls attention to the postmodern and postpositive divides regarding the status of knowledge in the 21st century: namely, Jean-Francois Lyotard's idea that the Western meta-narrative is dead and Karl Popper's assertion that knowledge is conjectural.

In light of these cultural experiences, Gen Xers seem to be quite fond of using cultural twists, quagmires and reinventions. We are witnessing similarly positioned work within the DIY craft community. The effect is that regardless of their political ambitions, anytime someone needlepoints a pleasant-looking phrase gleefully embedded with curse words, knits a skull and crossbones or makes a cozy for a tank [FIGURE 8], these cultural statements demonstrate 1) the semiotic literacy of the generation, 2) the nostalgic irony through which this generation prefers to operate and 3) how cynicism sometimes finds its way to the surface of this creative work. Quite simply, this work makes its cultural statements indirectly and quietly. Rather than bringing revolution to the front door and kicking it open, as their parents may have hoped to do, these independent makers are using the disarming and unassuming aesthetic of DIY craft's remixed domestic creativity to make subversive statements about the world in which they live [FIGURE 9].

Despite these differences, it does seem that if we dig below the surface, we can still find a shared raison d'etre for craft. An analysis of craft's ethos leads us back through a long history of resistance to both the industrial revolution and the general tendency of technology and capitalism to replace the more genuine and authentic forms of human production–namely, making things by hand. As studio craft and DIY craft continue to resist the world and each other, it should remain clear to all of us why we came to the party in the first place: to celebrate the handmade. And that's what we need to keep doing, making stuff and then sorting out, after the fact, whether it is good or not. Or does that matter anymore?

Dennis Stevens is a doctoral candidate in the Art and Art Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.

+
redefiningcraft.dennisstevens.net.

Mazza photo/Jim Finn, Joergensen photo/Barbara Katzin.

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Image: *La casa de Marta,* bracelet in silver, copper and enamel by Silvia Walz.

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Image: John Cheer, Allentown, PA. Ceramics. "Untitled."

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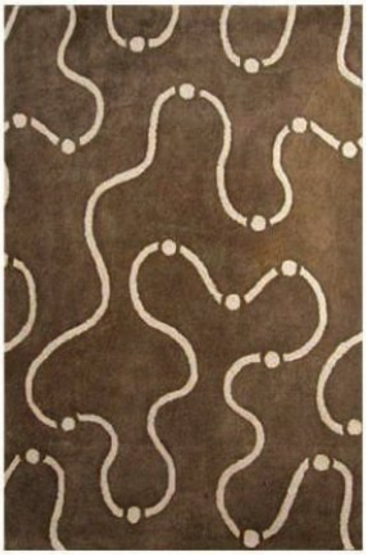


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On the following pages, American Craft recognizes the 11 recipients of the Aileen Osborn Webb Awards for 2008. Named for the founder of the American Craft Council, the awards honor those who have demonstrated outstanding artistic achievement, leadership and service in the craft field. The Gold Medal, for consummate craftsmanship, was presented to Paul Soldner.

Seven individuals were inducted into the College of Fellows. Since 1974, the Council has bestowed the title of Fellow on 254 artists, nominated and elected by a committee of their peers. Those elected have demonstrated extraordinary artistic ability and must have worked at least 25 years in the discipline or career for which they are being recognized (nonartists may be named Honorary Fellows).

In addition, an Award of Distinction for Contributions to the Field of Craft recognizes an individual, organization, institution or corporation that has made significant contributions to the field with a minimum of 25 years service, and the Award for Philanthropy honors exceptional support of or contribution to the American Craft Council. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the 2008 honorees. The 2009 awards will be featured in the December/January issue.



Below left:
Paul Soldner
Pink Vessel, 1979,
thrown, altered clay,
slips, stains, oxides
{h. 8 in, w. 10 in, d. 5 in}.

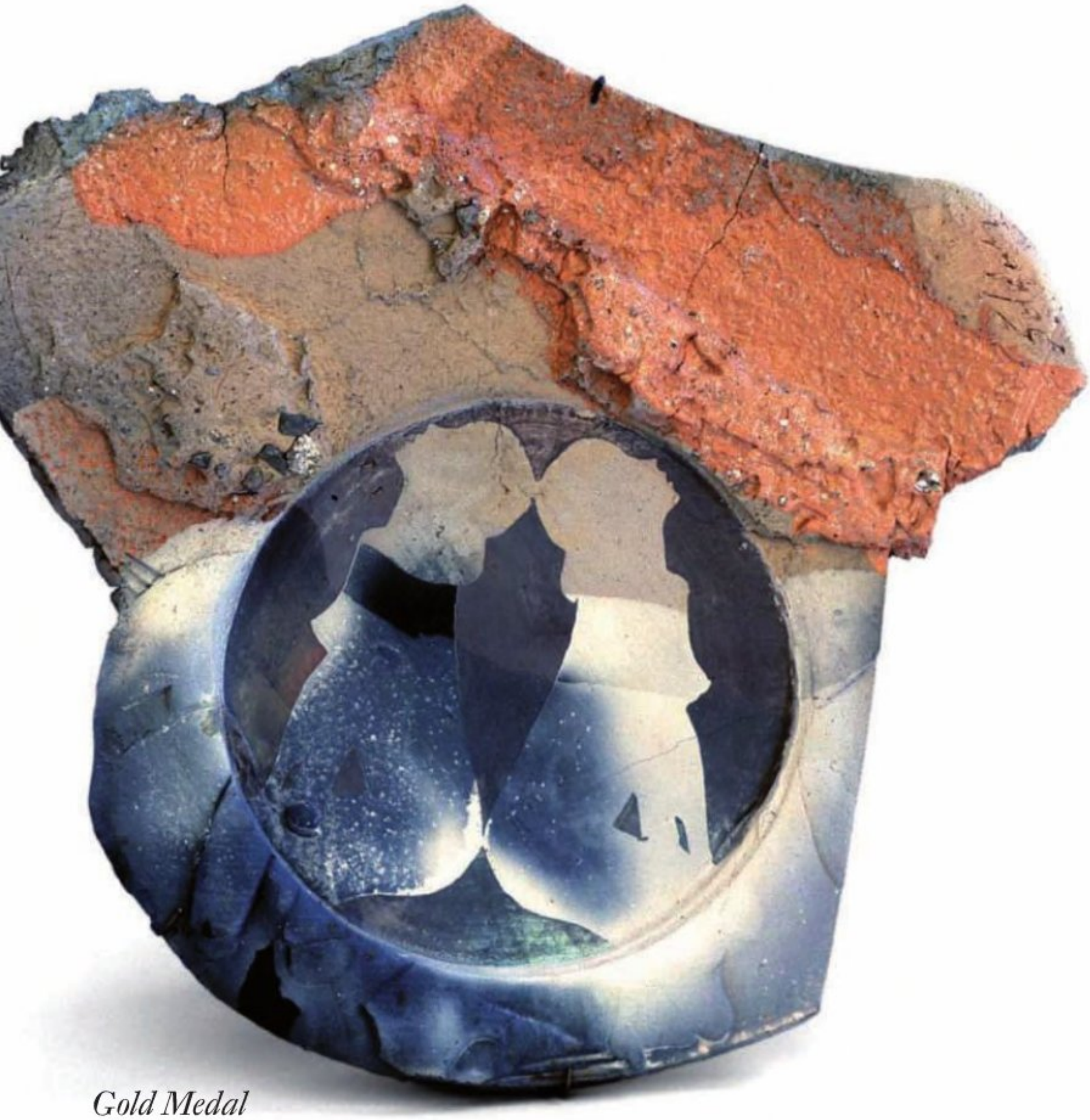
Below right:
Paul Soldner
Pedestal Piece, 1989,
thrown, altered raku,
copper slip {h. 28½ in,
w. 47 in, d. 8 in}.

Opposite:
Paul Soldner
Wall Piece, 1979,
thrown, altered raku,
salt-fired, stencils
{h. 22 in, w. 20½ in}.





Pedestal Piece/collection of Scripps College.



Aileen Osborn Webb Award for Philanthropy

Robyn & John Horn

National leaders in the support of contemporary crafts in a range of mediums, and notable encouragers of craft scholarship as well, Robyn and John Horn are also involved in creative work of their own. Robyn is a sculptor who works wood with a chainsaw, and John is a letter-press printer who has taught at Penland. They are founding members of the Collectors of Wood Art, and Robyn holds advisory positions with the Arkansas Arts Center, the Wharton Esherick Museum in Pennsylvania and the San Francisco Museum of Craft + Design. The Horns have been collecting crafts and sculpture for 25 years; a book, *Living with Form: The Horn Collection of Contemporary Crafts,* featured their collections and the house near Little Rock that they built to showcase the works.

Gold Medal

Paul Soldner

It is ironic that Paul Soldner, who is known for developing "American raku" and low-temperature salt firing, never planned to be a potter. Soldner (b. 1921) was pre-med when he was drafted into World War II. After the war Soldner turned to painting and received a B.F.A. from Bluffton College and an M.A. in art education from the University of Colorado. At age 33 Soldner went to the Los Angeles County Art Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design) to become Peter Voulkos's first graduate student. For nearly 40 years Soldner taught at Scripps College and Claremont Graduate School in California—he divides his time between California and Colorado, home of the Anderson Ranch Arts Center he founded. Soldner's work is motivated by curiosity. "Pushing boundaries and exploring something new gives me energy," he says.



Soldner portrait ca. 1965/Scripps College Archives.





Fellow
Adela Akers

Known for her woven wall hangings that create optical and impressionistic effects, Adela Akers has explored sculptural concerns in large-scale works that suggest waves through folds and repetition of lines. Akers was born in 1933 in Spain, grew up in Cuba, and came to the U.S. in 1957 to study art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and then Cranbrook Academy of Art. Now living in Guerneville, California, she is professor emerita at the Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, where she taught from 1972 to 1995. Her more recent work is flat and emphasizes rich surface detail. She says, "I am dealing with ideas, but I am also responding to the immediate tactile involvement of doing."

Fellow
Glenda Arentzen

A full-time studio goldsmith in New York City for more than four decades, Glenda Arentzen (b. 1941) has produced jewelry notable for its expressive and sensuous qualities. A graduate of Skidmore College (B.S. 1962) and Teachers College, Columbia University (M.A. 1964), Arentzen also studied metalworking as a Fulbright scholar in Denmark. She has taught at the Fashion Institute of Technology and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, among other places. Her proficiency in many techniques, including casting, marriage-of-metals and gemstone-setting, serves an artistic vision that captures the freshness of drawing and respects the role of the wearer. "My work is a response to a variety of moods and persons and ideas," Arentzen has said. "Life is an adventure, and body ornament can be one record of it."

Akers photo/Tom Grotta, Arentzen photo/Bob Barrett.

Opposite left:
Adela Akers
Broken Circle, 2008,
linen, horsehair, paint
{h. 63 in, w. 42 in}.

Opposite right:
Glenda Arentzen
Necklace, 2008,
sterling silver, 14ky
and 24k gold.



Award of Distinction for Contributions to the Field of Craft
Helen W. Drutt English

A passionate advocate of the studio craft movement since the 1960s, Helen W. Drutt English has advanced craft through her many roles. These have included founding member/executive director of the Philadelphia Council of Professional Craftsmen; founder/director of the Helen Drutt Gallery (among the first in the nation devoted to craft); and developer of a course in the history of modern craft for the Philadelphia College of Art, which awarded her an honorary doctorate in 2001. Especially drawn to avant-garde jewelry, she amassed a collection of some 800 works, acquired in 2002 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the subject of a touring exhibition and companion book. Acknowledging the Award of Distinction, Drutt says, "I was part of an amazing team not just in the United States but also abroad, united in our conviction that craft could not be denied its fitting place in the history of modern and contemporary art."



Fellow
Tony Hepburn

English-born Tony Hepburn, now based in Chicago, recently retired as head of ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan and formerly headed the department of art and design at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Hepburn (b. 1942) studied art at Camberwell and London University and first became known in the U.S. by writing for *Craft Horizons*, the predecessor of American Craft. Hepburn's work, often regarded as conceptual, responded to pottery and rural America during his time at Alfred and to technology and measurement in Michigan. He says, "I have never wanted my work to be visually coherent or stylistically linear; the world changes, so too does my work.... The mediating condition that resists confusion is the choice of clay as my... filter through which things pass."

Top:
Tony Hepburn
PPPlant, 2002, stoneware and earthenware, slip-cast, handbuilt, thrown {h. 36 in, w. 20 in, d. 20 in}.

Bottom:
Tony Hepburn
After Bosch, 2000, stoneware, thrown, handbuilt {h. 24 in, w. 24 in, d. 14 in}.

Photos/Tim Thayer.





Left:
Gyöngy Laky
Domain Change, 2009, wood, paint, various screws {h. 42 in, w. 25 in, d. 6½ in}.

Right:
Gyöngy Laky
Dada, 2007, plastic babies, {h. 36 in, w. 32 in, d. 1½ in}.

Bottom:
Wendy Maruyama
Vanity, 2005, pau ferro, silk, jade and video created by Maruyama using Final Cut Pro.





Fellow
Gyöngy Laky

A love of nature, architecture, language and the history of fiber art have shaped the work of Hungarian-born Gyöngy Laky (1944), who lives in San Francisco. The primary material for her constructions, which often form words or convey political messages, has been twigs, "among the most beautiful linear elements in existence," she says. Laky holds a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, where fiber art pioneer Ed Rossbach was a mentor, and she is professor emerita at University of California, Davis, where she taught fiber art and environmental design for 30 years. Laky's works are at home inside the museum or gallery, but in particular outdoors, in meadows and hillsides in the U.S. and Europe, a testament to her endless experimentation. Exterior installations, she says, "stretch my mind, abilities, ideas, everything."

Fellow
Wendy Maruyama

Innovative, expressive and provocative, Wendy Maruyama (b. 1952) heads the woodworking/furniture design program at San Diego State University, her undergraduate alma mater, where she has taught since 1989. Previously, she held the same position at California College of Arts and Crafts. Maruyama has an M.F.A. from Rochester Institute of Technology and is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant to England and travel grants to France and Japan, visits abroad that provided her with sources of inspiration. "Her distinctive work," Robert Long once wrote, "sparks the imagination of students, collectors and fellow makers." Profoundly swayed by her family's experience, her new work, *Executive Order 9066*, refers to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Domain Change photo/M. Lee Fatherree, *Dada* photo/Ben Blackwell, Maruyama photo/Dean Powell.

Top:
Toots Zynsky
Sopratutto, 2007,
filet-de-verre (fused and thermo-formed glass threads) {h. 19½ in, w. 14 in, d. 14 in}.

Bottom:
Toots Zynsky
Alea, 2008,
filet-de-verre (fused and thermo-formed glass threads) {h. 10½ in, w. 17¾ in , d. 11 in}.



Honorary Fellow
Lois Moran

Lois Moran was editor in chief of American Craft magazine from 1980 through 2006, when she retired after 43 years of service to the American Craft Council. "I love the act of editing," she said. "I always enjoyed working with artists and trying to deliver the message of their work in an honest way." An honors graduate from Tobe-Coburn School for Fashion Careers, Moran, who lives in New York City, held various positions with the Council including director of regional programming and, from 1988 to 1990, executive director. In 1993 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Women in the Craft Arts conference at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She received the Mint Museum of Craft + Design's Founders' Circle Award in 2006. An internationally recognized figure who has helped define the ever-changing world of craft, she continues to serve this constituency as a panelist, juror and consultant. +

Fellow
Toots Zynsky

In 1982 Toots Zynsky (b. 1951) began developing filet-de-verre, a groundbreaking technique in which glass threads are pulled from hot glass canes. Zynsky, who received her B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence (where she now lives), was also among the founders of the Pilchuck Glass School near Seattle and the Experimental Glass Workshop (now UrbanGlass in Brooklyn, New York). Her luminous vessels have garnered critical acclaim, and she was the first contemporary glass artist to have a piece commissioned by New York's Museum of Modern Art. "The astonishingly iridescent bowls of the glass artist Toots Zynsky evoke a sense of wonder," critic Arthur Danto once said, "in part because of their beauty, in part because of the craft that she so evidently commands."



Zynzky photos/courtesy of Barry Friedman Ltd., *Sopratutto*/collection of de Young Museum, San Francisco.

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Berlin: After the Fall

STORY BY
Martina Windels

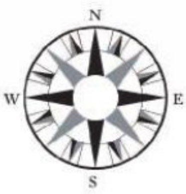
"Berlin is a perfect place for my body and mind to feel settled, but there are enough changes to feel 'new' and inspired every day," says Silke Spitzer, a jeweler and native of the former West Germany who moved to the city five years ago. "Berlin can feel almost a bit provincial, but the people who have continued to move here since the fall of the wall make for a lively mix."

Spitzer is, of course, referring to the Berlin Wall, which separated East and West Berlin since the early 1960s and served as a stark reminder of the cold war and its division of Europe. This year the city of Berlin is marking an important anniversary: 20 years ago, on November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down by peaceful revolution.

Much has happened in Berlin since then. The big swath of barren land opened up by the removal of the wall has slowly become filled with new offices, embassies and commercial developments like Potsdamer Platz. The Brandenburg Gate is fully restored, the old Reichstag proudly dons its glass hat and houses the government since its move from Bonn to the new (and former) German capital. The Mauer (Wall) Museum was inaugurated in 1998 and the East Side Gallery–one of the only significant remaining sections of the wall, which was painted on the side facing the former East Berlin after the *Wende* (transition) by artists from all over the world–is already undergoing a major restoration.

Many craftspeople have flocked to the city since the fall of the wall, especially ceramists and jewelry and clothing designers. The city is comparable to New York when it comes to number of artists living and working within its bounds. Studios are still affordable in Berlin; the apartments are plentiful and very reasonably priced compared to any other German city. This is what drew jeweler Karla Schabert there. Schabert, who crochets delicate earrings, brooches, necklaces and the like in colorful

Explore Berlin! Visit americancraftmag.org for even more information and photos. Click on our Wide World of Craft interactive map and find recommended places to visit, shop, eat and play!



Many craftspeople have flocked to the city since the fall of the wall, especially ceramists and jewelry and clothing designers.



thin French cotton thread around glass beads, shares a studio/store in the Prenzlauer Berg neighborhood with another jeweler, Ruth Temur. Schabert was trained as a goldsmith in Munich and studied painting in London before she made the move to Berlin in 2002. It was exactly what she was looking for: the opportunity to pursue her art while enjoying a reasonable cost of living.

Iris Hamelberg, who set up her ceramics studio in a small storefront on a side street off Rosa Luxemburg Street, a busy commercial corridor in Berlin Mitte, the city center where art thrives, has experienced the same advantages. "Even a storefront like this with my studio right here is affordable," she explains. There is a small showroom, but most of the space is taken over by Hamelberg's studio, where she creates her thin and elegant, hand-thrown white porcelain vessels and bowls, decorated with simple colored lines that emphasize their shape. ›

Opposite:
Ceramist Iris Hamelberg both makes and sells tableware, like these 2008 Limoges porcelain jugs, in a storefront in the center of Berlin.

Left:
Petra Brenner's bold necklaces, such as this 2006 cast and kiln-formed glass piece with pearls and latex, can be found at the shop Schmuck Fritz.

Bottom:
Anna Sykora has taken advantage of one of the many "store apartments" in Berlin. She lives above the ceramics studio where she hand throws porcelain objects such as these 2009 vases and tumbler.





In the age of supermarkets, many craftspeople have created combined live/work spaces in Berlin's former Ladenwohnungen, *or store apartments.*





Above and right: OONA gallery's avant-garde jewelry includes Volker Atrops's 2009 Swarovski crystals and fiber necklaces and Christian Hoedl's 2008 silk/raisin necklaces from his Backstage-Puristen series.

"I think this is the reason why craft artists in Berlin often set up studios in small retail locations," Hamelburg says. "We can still afford to be visible at street level."

Nearby, Christine Birkle, a fashion designer originally from Bavaria, who is well known for her handmade felted women's clothing, opened a store called Hut Up in the HeckmannHöfe–a small courtyard connecting two streets. Here she sells her signature line of wool and organza dresses, skirts and tops, which are all shaped through the felting process. They do not have any seams, which makes them reversible–even the beautiful wedding dress collection can be inverted to show a color other than white.

Other artisans have created combined live/work spaces in Berlin's former *Ladenwohnungen*, or store apartments. The residential areas of the city all previously had small grocers, bakeries and hardware stores that came with attached apartments, providing living spaces for the storeowner's family. In the age of supermarkets these artists have found a way to put these spaces to new use.

Anna Sykora has just this kind of setup–a retail space/studio located in a former grocery store apartment in Kreuzberg, a bohemian neighborhood neglected during the years of the wall. Originally trained as a model maker working for the ceramics industry in the former East Germany, she has been producing hand-thrown porcelain vases, bowls, cups and platters, sold in galleries throughout Europe and beyond, for almost 20 years. Clear shapes and clean lines adorned with abstract patterns in subtle, muted glazes dominate the display window and a makeshift counter, but most of the space in the store is dedicated to production; wheels for throwing, shelving for works in process and a large kiln dominate the space. Sykora loves the advantages of having a combination of the shop and studio. "I like having a presence in the neighborhood," she says, "a place where people from the neighborhood stop in and pick out a gift."

With so many artists selling their own wares directly from their studios, visitors to Berlin cannot expect to find an abundance of craft galleries. There are, however, several notable exceptions–such as OONA, an über-cool jewelry gallery exhibiting an avant-garde collection representing about 20 artists currently on the forefront of the international jewelry scene. The gallery, which was opened in 2000 in Berlin Mitte by Anna Schetelich, puts on six shows a year with a strong focus on work by graduates from the Munich Akademie–such as Volker Atrops's casual pieces incorporating sheets of commercial crystals–and a group of noted Japanese designers including Jiro Kamata, who creates jewelry through the combination of sunglass lenses with highly polished metal surfaces.

Fascinating jewelry can also be found›

Photos/Till Bortels.

Ulrike Hamm is one of many Berlin jewelers experimenting with various materials. This delicate bracelet is made from colored parchment.





Below, left and right: Local fashion designer Claudia Skoda finds Berlin is the perfect place to create edgy styles, thanks in part to the open-minded outlook of its residents.

Right: Paul Reimert's *Bad Weed III*, 2008, an 8-foot-high work made from metal, ceramic shards, cement, epoxy resin and pigments, communicates his disdain for mass-produced kitschy figurines.

"People in Berlin are not craving material possessions. They are doing well and are enjoying life."—Claudia Skoda, designer







at Schmuck Fritz, located in Kreuzberg. Owned by Manuel Fritz, a jeweler himself, the shop offers an eclectic selection of jewelry such as earrings made from printed parchment by Ulrike Hamm, the chunky cast glass pendants of Petra Brenner and Silke Spitzer's bold linoleum pieces.

Another artist represented at the shop is Bernd Kühn, a ceramist who also owns his own store, where he makes and sells an over-the-top collection of porcelain. Large vessels covered with strawberries and tall, lidded vases with dog-shaped handles and skull paintings make up this collection of what he describes as "polished punk."

The antithesis to this work can be found at the studio of Paul Reimert, a Dutch artist who has lived in Berlin for over 30 years. His ceramic collages include life-size male figures, as well as pigs or trees made entirely from ceramic bunny heads covered in glue and paint. "I frequent the local flea markets," he explains. "I'm saddened to see how many people enjoy kitschy ceramic figurines." He recycles these mass-produced objects by destroying them and using the shards to assemble detailed one-of-a-kind pieces–a personal one-man crusade to transform the everyday into art.

Work like Reimert's is a testament to the mindset in Berlin since the fall of the wall and explains to some extent why artists have thrived there. A progressive attitude permeates the city. Claudia Skoda, a knitwear designer, observes that Berlin has never been a place for high fashion but rather has embraced an edgy street wear that has gone mainstream here since reunification. "I am glad we did not get the extreme consumerism found in other communist countries after the opening to the West," she says. "People in Berlin are not craving material possessions. They are doing well and are content, enjoying life. ✚

Martina Windels is a jeweler living in Providence, Rhode Island.

AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL

The American Craft Council is a national, nonprofit public educational organization founded in 1943 by Aileen Osborn Webb. The mission of the Council is to promote understanding and appreciation of contemporary American craft. Programs include the bimonthly magazine American Craft, annual juried shows presenting artists and their work, the Aileen Osborn Webb Awards honoring excellence, a specialized library, conferences, workshops and seminars.

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The Ceramic Self

STORY BY
Christine Kaminsky



In the April/May 1980 American Craft, art critic Matthew Kangas profiled Patti Warashina as a sculptor with "uncompromising devotion to personal, idiosyncratic expression," noting parallels between the evolution of her work and many developments in American social history.

Recognized for her mastery of various ceramic techniques, impeccable design sense and often satirical take on the human figure, the Seattle-based artist is a professor emerita at the University of Washington, her alma mater, where she taught for 25 years.

Warashina's work, widely exhibited, is featured in museum collections here and abroad, including the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery and the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan.

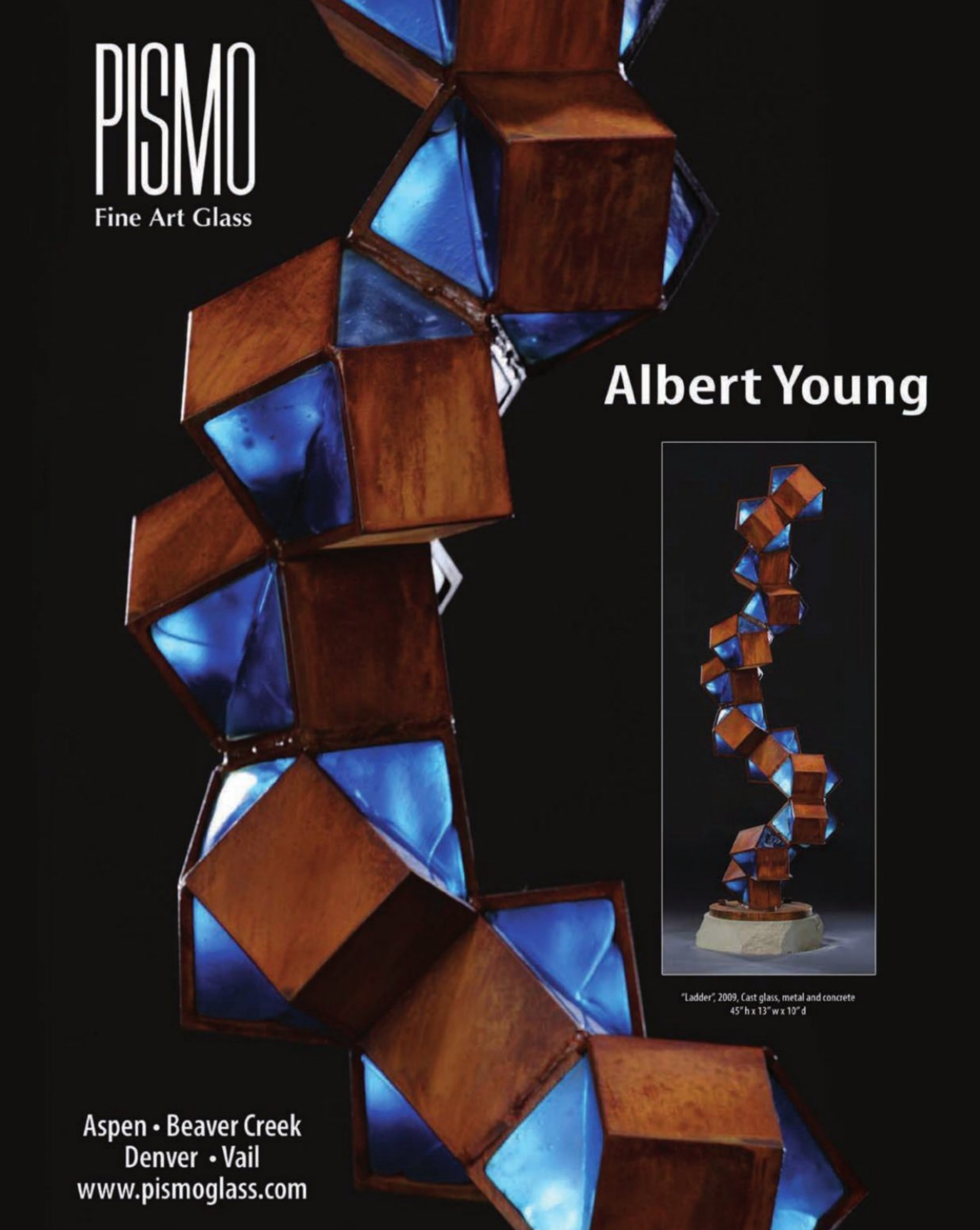
Elected to the American Craft Council's College of Fellows in 1994, Warashina has garnered numerous awards, including the University of Washington Division of the Arts Distinguished Alumna Award in 2003 and the 2001 Twining Humber Lifetime Achievement/Woman of the Year Award from Seattle's Artist Trust. She was interviewed in 2005 for Smithsonian's Archives of American Art.

In recent years, the versatile artist has ventured into both bronze and printmaking. As we go to press, her first large bronze, *City Reflections*, a public outdoor sculpture commissioned for Tri-Met in Portland, Oregon, is being cast and installed as part of the Northwest Sculpture Collection. Her explorations while working on this sculpture led to a new series of ceramic work—"Conversations"—on view, with other works by the artist and by potter Ron Meyers, through November 8 in the Northern Clay Center's "2009 Regis Master Series Exhibition" in Minneapolis. She says of her array of interests, "It seems that each area asks more questions than time allows, as life is fleeting, so it's important to follow your passions." ✚

To view the entire American Craft article, visit us at americancraftmag.org.

Tucked away on the sixth floor of 72 Spring Street in New York City is the American Craft Council library, one of the largest collections in this country of craft, art and design books documenting the studio craft movement from the 1940s to the present. The over 14,000 volumes include the Council's 67-year publishing history—all past issues of *Craft Horizons* and American Craft. We'd like to share some of this amazing past with you each issue as we dig though the stacks. And if you happen to be in New York, the library is open to the public by appointment.





"Ladder", 2009, Cast glass, metal and concrete
45" h x 13" w x 10" d

